

# ГЕНРИК СЕНКЕВИЧ

THE KNIGHTS OF THE  
CROSS, OR, KRZYZACY

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**The Knights of the  
Cross, or, Krzyzacy**

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# Henryk Sienkiewicz

## The Knights of the Cross, or, Krzyzacy: Historical Romance

### To the Reader

Here you have, gentle reader – old writers always called you gentle – something very much more than a novel to amuse an idle hour. To read it will be enjoyable pastime, no doubt; but the brilliant romance of the brilliant author calls upon you for some exercise of the finest sympathy and intelligence; sympathy for a glorious nation which, with only one exception, has suffered beyond all other nations; intelligence, of the sources of that unspeakable and immeasurable love and of the great things that may yet befall before those woes are atoned for and due punishment for them meted out to their guilty authors.

Poland! Poland! The very name carries with it sighings and groanings, nation-murder, brilliance, beauty, patriotism, splendors, self-sacrifice through generations of gallant men and exquisite women; indomitable endurance of bands of noble people carrying through world-wide exile the sacred fire of wrath against the oppressor, and uttering in every clime a cry of appeal to Humanity to rescue Poland.

It was indeed a terrible moment in history, when the three military monarchies of Europe, Russia, Austria and Prussia, swooped down upon the glorious but unhappy country, torn by internal trouble, and determined to kill it and divide up its dominions. All were alike guilty, as far as motive went. But Holy Russia – Holy! – since that horrible time has taken upon herself by far the greatest burden of political crime in her dealings with that noble nation. Every evil passion bred of despotism, of theological hatred, of rancorous ancient enmities, and the ghastliest official corruption, have combined in Russian action for more than one hundred and fifty years, to turn Poland into a hell on earth. Her very language was proscribed.

This is not the place to give details of that unhappy country's woes. But suffice it to say, that Poland, in spite of fatuous prohibitions, has had a great literature since the loss of her independence, and that literature has so kept alive the soul of the nation, that with justice Poland sings her great patriotic song:

"Poland is not yet lost  
As long as we live..."

The nation is still alive in its writers and their works, their splendid poetry and prose.

It is a pity that so few of these great writers are widely known. But most people have heard of Jan Kochanowski, of Mikolaj Rey, of Rubinski, of Szymanowicz, of Poland's great genius in this century, one of the supreme poets of the world, Adam Mickiewicz, of Joseph Ignac, of Kraszewski, who is as prolific in literary and scientific works as Alexander von Humboldt, and of hundreds of others in all branches of science and art, too numerous to mention here.

And it is remarkable that the author of this book, Henryk Sienkiewicz, should of late have attained such prominence in the public eye and found a place in the heart of mankind. It is of good omen. Thus, Poland, in spite of her fetters, is keeping step in the very van of the most progressive nations.

The romance of Sienkiewicz in this volume is perhaps the most interesting and fascinating he has yet produced. It is in the very first rank of imaginative and historical romance. The time

and scene of the noble story are laid in the middle ages during the conquest of Pagan Lithuania by the military and priestly order of the "Krzyzacy" Knights of the Cross. And the story exhibits with splendid force the collision of race passions and fierce, violent individualities which accompanied that struggle. Those who read it will, in addition to their thrilling interest in the tragical and varied incidents, gain no little insight into the origin and working of the inextinguishable race hatred between Teuton and Slav. It was an unfortunate thing surely, that the conversion of the heathen Lithuanians and Zmudzians was committed so largely to that curious variety of the missionary, the armed knight, banded in brotherhood, sacred and military. To say the least, his sword was a weapon dangerous to his evangelizing purpose. He was always in doubt whether to present to the heathen the one end of it, as a cross for adoration, or the other, as a point *to kill with*. And so, if Poland *was* made a Catholic nation, she was also made an undying and unalterable hater of the German, the Teutonic name and person.

And so this noble, historical tale, surpassed perhaps by none in literature, is commended to the thoughtful attention and appreciation of the reader.

*SAMUEL A. BINION.*

NEW YORK, May 9, 1899.

## PART FIRST

### CHAPTER I

In Tyniec,[1] in the inn under "Dreadful Urus," which belonged to the abbey, a few people were sitting, listening to the talk of a military man who had come from afar, and was telling them of the adventures which he had experienced during the war and his journey.

He had a large beard but he was not yet old, and he was almost gigantic but thin, with broad shoulders; he wore his hair in a net ornamented with beads; he was dressed in a leather jacket, which was marked by the cuirass, and he wore a belt composed of brass buckles; in the belt he had a knife in a horn scabbard, and at his side a short traveling sword.

Near by him at the table, was sitting a youth with long hair and joyful look, evidently his comrade, or perhaps a shield-bearer, because he also was dressed as for a journey in a similar leather jacket. The rest of the company was composed of two noblemen from the vicinity of Krakow and of three townsmen with red folding caps, the thin tops of which were hanging down their sides to their elbows.

The host, a German, dressed in a faded cowl with large, white collar, was pouring beer for them from a bucket into earthen mugs, and in the meanwhile he was listening with great curiosity to the military adventures.

The burghers were listening with still greater curiosity. In these times, the hatred, which during the time of King Lokietek had separated the city and the knighthood, had been very much quenched, and the burghers were prouder than in the following centuries. They called them still *des allerdurchluchtigsten Kuniges und Herren* and they appreciated their readiness *ad concessionem pecuniarum*; therefore one would very often see in the inns, the merchants drinking with the noblemen like brothers. They were even welcome, because having plenty of money, usually they paid for those who had coats of arms.

Therefore they were sitting there and talking, from time to time winking at the host to fill up the mugs.

"Noble knight, you have seen a good piece of the world!" said one of the merchants.

"Not many of those who are now coming to Krakow from all parts, have seen as much," answered the knight.

"There will be plenty of them," said the merchant. "There is to be a great feast and great pleasure for the king and the queen! The king has ordered the queen's chamber to be upholstered with golden brocade, embroidered with pearls, and a canopy of the same material over her. There will be such entertainments and tournaments, as the world has never seen before."

"Uncle Gamroth, don't interrupt the knight," said the second merchant.

"Friend Eyertreter, I am not interrupting; only I think that he also will be glad to know about what they are talking, because I am sure he is going to Krakow. We cannot return to the city to-day at any rate, because they will shut the gates."

"And you speak twenty words, in reply to one. You are growing old, Uncle Gamroth!"

"But I can carry a whole piece of wet broadcloth just the same."

"Great thing! the cloth through which one can see, as through a sieve."

But further dispute was stopped by the knight, who said:

"Yes, I will stay in Krakow because I have heard about the tournaments and I will be glad to try my strength in the lists during the combats; and this youth, my nephew, who although young and smooth faced, has already seen many cuirasses on the ground, will also enter the lists."

The guests glanced at the youth who laughed mirthfully, and putting his long hair behind his ears, placed the mug of beer to his mouth.

The older knight added:

"Even if we would like to return, we have no place to go."

"How is that?" asked one of the nobles.

"Where are you from, and what do they call you?"

"I am Macko of Bogdaniec, and this lad, the son of my brother, calls himself Zbyszko. Our coat of arms is Tempa Podkowa, and our war-cry is Grady!"

"Where is Bogdaniec?"

"Bah! better ask, lord brother, where it was, because it is no more. During the war between Grzymalczyks and Nalenczs,[2] Bogdaniec was burned, and we were robbed of everything; the servants ran away. Only the bare soil remained, because even the farmers who were in the neighborhood, fled into the forests. The father of this lad, rebuilt; but the next year, a flood took everything. Then my brother died, and after his death I remained with the orphan. Then I thought: 'I can't stay!' I heard about the war for which Jasko of Olesnica, whom the king, Wladyslaw, sent to Wilno after he sent Mikolaj of Moskorzowo, was collecting soldiers. I knew a worthy abbot, Janko of Tulcza, to whom I gave my land as security for the money I needed to buy armor and horses, necessary for a war expedition. The boy, twelve years old, I put on a young horse and we went to Jasko of Olesnica."

"With the youth?"

"He was not even a youth then, but he has been strong since childhood. When he was twelve, he used to rest a crossbow on the ground, press it against his chest and turn the crank. None of the Englishmen, whom I have seen in Wilno, could do better."

"Was he so strong?"

"He used to carry my helmet, and when he passed thirteen winters, he could carry my spear also."

"You had plenty of fighting there!"

"Because of Witold. The prince was with the Knights of the Cross, and every year they used to make an expedition against Lithuania, as far as Wilno. Different people went with them: Germans, Frenchmen, Englishmen, who are the best bowmen, Czechs, Swiss and Burgundians. They cut down the forests, burned the castles on their way and finally they devastated Lithuania with fire and sword so badly, that the people who were living in that country, wanted to leave it and search for another land, even to the end of the world, even among Belial's children, only far from the Germans."

"We heard here, that the Lithuanians wanted to go away with their wives and children, but we did not believe it."

"And I looked at it. Hej! If not for Mikolaj of Moskorzowo, for Jasko of Olesnica, and without any boasting, if not for us, there would be no Wilno now."

"We know. You did not surrender the castle."

"We did not. And now notice what I am going to say, because I have experience in military matters. The old people used to say: 'furious Litwa'[3] – and it's true! They fight well, but they cannot withstand the knights in the field. When the horses of the Germans are sunk in the marshes, or when there is a thick forest – that's different."

"The Germans are good soldiers!" exclaimed the burghers.

"They stay like a wall, man beside man, in their iron armor. They advance in one compact body. They strike, and the Litwa are scattered like sand, or throw themselves flat on the ground and are trampled down. There are not only Germans among them, because men of all nations serve with the Knights of the Cross. And they are brave! Often before a battle a knight stoops, stretches his lance, and rushes alone against the whole army."

"Christ!" exclaimed Gamroth. "And who among them are the best soldiers?"

"It depends. With the crossbow, the best is the Englishman, who can pierce a suit of armor through and through, and at a hundred steps he will not miss a dove. Czechowie (Bohemians) cut dreadfully with axes. For the big two-handed sword the German is the best. The Swiss is glad to strike the helmets with an iron flail, but the greatest knights are those who come from France. These will fight on horseback and on foot, and in the meanwhile they will speak very brave words, which however you will not understand, because it is such a strange language. They are pious people. They criticise us through the Germans. They say we are defending the heathen and the Turks against the cross, and they want to prove it by a knightly duel. And such God's judgment is going to be held between four knights from their side, and four from our side, and they are going to fight at the the court of Waclaw, the Roman and Bohemian king." [4]

Here the curiosity so increased among the noblemen and merchants, that they stretched their necks in the direction of Macko of Bogdaniec and they asked:

"And who are the knights from our side? Speak quickly!" Macko raised the mug to his mouth, drank and then answered:

"Ej, don't be afraid about them. There is Jan of Wloszczowa, castellan of Dobrzyn; there's Mikolaj of Waszmuntow; there are Jasko of Zdakow and Jarosz of Czechow: all glorious knights and sturdy fellows. No matter which weapons they choose, – swords or axes – nothing new to them! It will be worth while for human eyes to see it and for human ears to hear it – because, as I said, even if you press the throat of a Frenchman with your foot, he will still reply with knightly words. Therefore so help me God and Holy Cross they will outtalk us, but our knights will defeat them."

"That will be glory, if God will bless us," said one of the nobles.

"And Saint Stanislaw!" added another. Then turning toward Macko, he asked him further:

"Well! tell us some more! You praised the Germans and other knights because they are valiant and have conquered Litwa easily. Did they not have harder work with you? Did they go against you readily? How did it happen? Praise our knights."

But evidently Macko of Bogdaniec was not a braggart, because he answered modestly:

"Those who had just returned from foreign lands, attacked us readily; but after they tried once or twice, they attacked us with less assurance, because our people are hardened and they reproached us for that hardness: 'You despise,' they used to say, 'death, but you help the Saracens, and you will be damned for it.' And with us the deadly grudge increased, because their taunt is not true! The king and the queen have christened Litwa and everyone there tries to worship the Lord Christ although not everyone knows how. And it is known also, that our gracious lord, when in the cathedral of Plock they threw down the devil, ordered them to put a candle before him – and the priests were obliged to tell him that he ought not to do it. No wonder then about an ordinary man! Therefore many of them say to themselves:

"The *kniaz* [5] ordered us to be baptized, therefore I was baptized; he ordered us to bow before the Christ, and I bowed; but why should I grudge a little piece of cheese to the old heathen devils, or why should I not throw them some turnips; why should I not pour the foam off of the beer? If I do not do it, then my horses will die; or my cows will be sick, or their milk will turn into blood – or there will be some trouble with the harvest.' And many of them do this, and they are suspected. But they are doing it because of their ignorance and their fear of the devils. Those devils were better off in times of yore. They used to have their own groves and they used to take the horses which they rode for their tithe. But to-day, the groves are cut down and they have nothing to eat – in the cities the bells ring, therefore the devils are hiding in the thickest forest, and they howl there from loneliness. If a Litwin [6] goes to the forest, then they pull him by his sheep-skin overcoat and they say: 'Give!' Some of them give, but there are also courageous boys, who will not give and then the devils catch them. One of the boys put some beans in an ox bladder and immediately three hundred devils entered there. And he stuffed the bladder with a service-tree peg, brought them to Wilno and sold them to the Franciscan priests, who gave him twenty *skojcow* [7] he did this to destroy the enemies of Christ's

name. I have seen that bladder with my own eyes; a dreadful stench came from it, because in that way those dirty spirits manifested their fear before holy water."

"And who counted them, that you know there were three hundred devils," asked the merchant Gamroth, intelligently.

"The Litwin counted them, when he saw them entering the bladder. It was evident that they were there, because one would know it from the stench, and nobody wished to take out the peg to count them."

"What wonders, what wonders!" exclaimed one of the nobles.

"I have seen many great wonders, because everything is peculiar among them. They are shaggy and hardly any *kniaz* combs his hair; they live on baked turnips, which they prefer to any other food, because they say that bravery comes from eating them. They live in the forests with their cattle and snakes; they are not abstinent in eating nor drinking. They despise the married women, but greatly respect the girls to whom they attribute great power. They say that if a girl rubs a man with dried leaves, it will stop colic."

"It's worth while to have colic, if the women are beautiful!" exclaimed Uncle Eyertrerer.

"Ask Zbyszko about it," answered Macko of Bogdaniec.

Zbyszko laughed so heartily that the bench began to shake beneath him.

"There are some beautiful ones," he said. "Ryngalla was charming."

"Who is Ryngalla? Quick!"

"What? you haven't heard about Ryngalla?" asked Macko.

"We have not heard a word."

"She was Witold's sister, and the wife of Henryk, Prince Mazowiecki."

"You don't say! Which Prince Henryk? There was only one Prince Mazowiecki, elect[8] of Plock, but he died."

"The same one. He expected a dispensation from Rome, but death gave him his dispensation, because evidently he had not pleased God by his action. Jasko of Olesnica sent me with a letter to Prince Witold, when Prince Henryk, elect of Plock, was sent by the king to Ryterswerder. At that time, Witold was tired of the war, because he could not capture Wilno, and our king was tired of his own brothers and their dissipation. The king having noticed that Witold was shrewder and more intelligent than his own brothers, sent the bishop to him, to persuade him to leave the Knights of the Cross, and return to his allegiance, for which he promised to make him ruler over Litwa. Witold, always fond of changing, listened with pleasure to the embassy. There were also a feast and tournaments. The elect mounted a horse, although the other bishops did not approve of it, and in the lists he showed his knightly strength. All the princes of Mazowsze are very strong; it is well known, that even the girls of that blood can easily break horseshoes. In the beginning the prince threw three knights from their saddles; the second time he threw five of them. He threw me from my saddle, and in the beginning of the encounter, Zbyszko's horse reared and he was thrown. The prince took all the prizes from the hands of the beautiful Ryngalla, before whom he kneeled in full armor. They fell so much in love with each other, that dining the feasts, the *clerici*[9] pulled him from her by his sleeves and her brother, Witold, restrained her. The prince said: 'I will give myself a dispensation, and the pope, if not the one in Home, then the one in Avignon, will confirm it, but I must marry her immediately – otherwise I will burn up!' It was a great offence against God, but Witold did not dare to oppose him, because he did not want to displease the ambassador – and so there was a wedding. Then they went to Suraz, and afterward to Sluck, to the great sorrow of this youth, Zbyszko, who, according to the German custom, had selected the Princess Ryngalla to be the lady of his heart and had promised her eternal fidelity."

"Bah!" suddenly interrupted Zbyszko, "it's true. But afterward the people said that Ryngalla regretted being the wife of the elect (because he, although married, did not want to renounce his spiritual dignity) and feeling that God's blessing could not be over such a marriage, poisoned her

husband. When I heard that, I asked a pious hermit, living not far from Lublin, to absolve me from that vow."

"He was a hermit," answered Macko, laughing, "but was he pious? I don't know; we went to him on Friday, and he was splitting bear's bones with an axe, and sucking the marrow so hard, that there was music in his throat."

"But he said that the marrow was not meat, and besides he had received permission to do it, because after sucking marrow, he used to have marvelous visions during his sleep and the next day he could prophesy until noontime."

"Well, well!" answered Macko. "And the beautiful Ryngalla is a widow and she may call you to her service."

"It would be in vain, because I am going to choose another lady, whom I will serve till death, and then I will find a wife."

"You must first find the girdle of a knight."

"*Owa!*[10] There will be plenty of tournaments. And before that the king will not dub a single knight. I can measure myself against any. The prince could not have thrown me down, if my horse had not reared."

"There will be knights here better than you are."

Here the noblemen began to shout:

"For heaven's sake! Here, in the presence of the queen, will fight not such as you, but only the most famous knights in the world. Here will fight Zawisza of Garbow and Farurej, Dobko of Olesnica, Powala of Taczew, Paszko Zlodzie of Biskupice, Jasko Naszan and Abdank of Gora. Andrzej of Brochocice, Krystyn of Ostrow, and Jakob of Kobylany! Can you measure your sword against the swords of those, with whom neither the knights here, nor of the Bohemian court, nor of the Hungarian court can compete? What are you talking about? Are you better than they? How old are you?"

"Eighteen," answered Zbyszko.

"Everyone of them could crush you between his fingers."

"We will see."

But Macko said:

"I have heard that the king rewarded those knights munificently who returned from the Lithuanian war. Speak, you belong here; is it true?"

"Yes, it is true!" answered one of the nobles. "The king's munificence is known to the world; but it will be difficult to get near him now, because the guests are swarming to Krakow; they are coming to be in time for the queen's confinement and for the christening, wishing to show reverence to our lord and to render him homage. The king of Hungary is coming; they say the Roman emperor will be here also, and plenty of princes, counts and knights, will come because not one of them expects to return with empty hands. They even say that Pope Boniface, himself will arrive, because he also needs favor and help from our lord against his adversary in Avignon. Therefore in such a crowd, it will be difficult to approach the king; but if one would be able to see him and bow at his feet, then he will liberally reward him who deserves it."

"Then I will bow before him, because I have served enough, and if there is another war, I shall go again. We have taken some booty, and we are not poor; but I am getting old, and when one is old, and the strength has left his bones, one is pleased to have a quiet corner."

"The king was glad to see those who returned from Litwa with Jasko of Olesnica; and they feast well now."

"You see I did not return at that time; I was still at the war. You know that the Germans have suffered because of that reconciliation between the king and *Kniaz* Witold. The prince cunningly got the hostages back, and then rushed against the Germans! He ruined and burned the castle and slaughtered the knights and a great many of the people. The Germans wanted revenge, as did also Swidrygello, who went to them. There was again a great expedition started. The grand master Kondrat

himself went with a great army; they besieged Wilno, and tried from their towers to ruin the castles; they also tried to capture the city by treachery – but they did not succeed! While retreating there were so many killed, that even half of them did not escape. Then we attacked Ulrich von Jungingen, the grand master's brother, who is bailiff in Swabja. But the bailiff was afraid of the *kniaz* and ran away. On account of this flight there is peace, and they are rebuilding the city. One pious monk, who could walk with bare feet on hot iron, has prophesied since that time, that as long as the world exists, no German soldier will be seen under the walls of Wilno. And if that be so, then whose hands have done it?"

Having said this, Macko of Bogdaniec, extended his palms, broad and enormous; the others began to nod and to approve:

"Yes, yes! It's true what he says! Yes!"

But further conversation was interrupted by a noise entering through the windows from which the bladders had been taken out, because the night was warm and clear. From afar thrumming, singing, laughing and the snorting of horses were heard. They were surprised because it was quite late. The host rushed to the yard of the inn, but before the guests were able to drink their beer to the last drop, he returned shouting:

"Some court is coming!"

A moment afterward, in the door appeared a footman dressed in a blue jacket and wearing a red folding cap. He stopped, glanced at the guests, and then having perceived the host, he said:

"Wipe the tables and prepare lights; the princess, Anna Danuta, will stop here to-night."

Having said this, he withdrew. In the inn a great commotion began; the host called his servants, and the guests looked at one another with great surprise.

"Princess Anna Danuta," said one of the townsmen, "she is Kiejstutowna,[11] Janusz Mazowiecki's wife. She was in Krakow two weeks, but she went to Zator to visit Prince Waclaw, and now she is coming back."

"Uncle Gamroth," said the other townsman, "let us go to the barn and sleep on the hay; the company is too high for us."

"I don't wonder they are traveling during the night," said Macko, "because the days are very warm; but why do they come to the inn when the monastery is so near?"

Here he turned toward Zbyszko:

"The beautiful Ryngalla's own sister; do you understand?"

And Zbyszko answered:

"There must be many Mazovian ladies with her, hej!"

## CHAPTER II

At that moment the princess entered. She was a middle-aged lady with a smiling face, dressed in a red mantle and light green dress with a golden girdle around her hips. The princess was followed by the ladies of the court; some not yet grown up, some of them older; they had pink and lilac wreaths on their heads, and the majority of them had lutes in their hands. Some of them carried large bunches of fresh, flowers, evidently plucked by the roadside. The room was soon filled, because the ladies were followed by some courtiers and young pages. All were lively, with mirth on their faces, talking loudly or humming as if they were intoxicated with the beauty of the night. Among the courtiers, there were two *rybalt*s;[12] one had a lute and the other had a *gensla*[13] at his girdle. One of the girls who was very young, perhaps twelve years old, carried behind the princess a very small lute ornamented with brass nails.

"May Jesus Christ be praised!" said the princess, standing in the centre of the room.

"For ages and ages, amen!" answered those present, in the meanwhile saluting very profoundly.

"Where is the host?"

The German having heard the call, advanced to the front and kneeled, in the German fashion, on one knee.

"We are going to stop here and rest," said the lady. "Only be quick, because we are hungry."

The townsmen had already gone; now the two noblemen, and with them Macko of Bogdaniec and young Zbyszko, bowed again, intending to leave the room, as they did not wish to interfere with the court.

But the princess detained them.

"You are noblemen; you do not intrude, you are acquainted with courtiers.

From where has God conducted you?"

Then they mentioned their names,[14] their coats of arms, their nicknames and the estates from which they received their names. The lady having heard from *wlodyka*[15] Macko that he had been to Wilno, clapped her hands, and said:

"How well it has happened! Tell us about Wilno and about my brother and sister. Is Prince Witold coming for the queen's confinement and for the christening?"

"He would like to, but does not know whether he will be able to do so; therefore he sent a silver cradle to the queen for a present. My nephew and I brought that cradle."

"Then the cradle is here? I would like to see it! All silver?"

"All silver; but it is not here. The Basilians took it to Krakow."

"And what are you doing in Tyniec?"

"We returned here to see the procurator of the monastery who is our relative, in order to deposit with the worthy monks, that with which the war has blessed us and that which the prince gave us for a present."

"Then God gave you good luck and valuable booty? But tell me why my brother is uncertain whether he will come?"

"Because he is preparing an expedition against the Tartars."

"I know it; but I am grieved that the queen did not prophesy a happy result for that expedition, and everything she predicts is always fulfilled."

Macko smiled.

"Ej, our lady is a prophetess, I cannot deny; but with Prince Witold, the might of our knighthood will go, splendid men, against whom nobody is able to contend."

"Are you not going?"

"No, I was sent with the cradle, and for five years I have not taken off my armor," answered Macko, showing the furrows made by the cuirass on his reindeer jacket; "but let me rest, then I will

go, or if I do not go myself then I will send this youth, my nephew, Zbyszko, to Pan[16] Spytko of Melsztyn, under whose command all our knights will go."

Princess Danuta glanced at Zbyszko's beautiful figure; but further conversation was interrupted by the arrival of a monk from the monastery, who having greeted the princess, began to humbly reproach her, because she had not sent a courier with the news that she was coming, and because she had not stopped at the monastery, but in an ordinary inn which was not worthy of her majesty. There are plenty of houses and buildings in the monastery where even an ordinary man will find hospitality, and royalty is still more welcome, especially the wife of that prince from whose ancestors and relatives, the abbey had experienced so many benefits.

But the princess answered mirthfully:

"We came here only to stretch our limbs; in the morning we must be in Krakow. We sleep during the day and we travel during the night, because it is cooler. As the roosters were crowing, I did not wish to awaken the pious monks, especially with such a company which thinks more about singing and dancing than about repose."

But when the monk still insisted, she added:

"No. We will stay here. We will spend the time well in singing lay songs, but we will come to the church for matins in order to begin the day with God."

"There will be a mass for the welfare of the gracious prince and the gracious princess," said the monk.

"The prince, my husband, will not come for four or five days."

"The Lord God will be able to grant happiness even from afar, and in the meanwhile let us poor monks at least bring some wine from the monastery."

"We will gladly repay," said the princess.

When the monk went out, she called:

"Hej, Danusia! Danusia! Mount the bench and make our hearts merry with the same song you sang in Zator."

Having heard this, the courtiers put a bench in the centre of the room. The *rybalts* sat on the ends, and between them stood that young girl who had carried behind the princess the lute ornamented with brass nails. On her head she had a small garland, her hair falling on her shoulders, and she wore a blue dress and red shoes with long points. On the bench she looked like a child, but at the same time, a beautiful child, like some figure from a church. It was evident that she was not singing for the first time before the princess, because she was not embarrassed.

"Sing, Danusia, sing!" the young court girls shouted.

She seized the lute, raised her head like a bird which begins to sing, and having closed her eyes, she began with a silvery voice:

"If I only could get  
The wings like a birdie,  
I would fly quickly  
To my dearest Jasiiek!"

The *rybalts* accompanied her, one on the *gensliks*, the other on a big lute; the princess, who loved the lay songs better than anything else in the world, began to move her head back and forth, and the young girl sang further with a thin, sweet childish voice, like a bird singing in the forest:

"I would then be seated  
On the high enclosure:  
Look, my dear Jasiulku,  
Look on me, poor orphan."

And then the *rybalt*s played. The young Zbyszko of Bogdaniec, who being accustomed from childhood to war and its dreadful sights, had never in his life heard anything like it; he touched a Mazur[17] standing beside him and asked:

"Who is she?"

"She is a girl from the princess' court. We do not lack *rybalt*s who cheer up the court, but she is the sweetest little *rybalt* of them all, and to the songs of no one else will the princess listen so gladly."

"I don't wonder. I thought she was an angel from heaven and I can't look at her enough. What do they call her?"

"Have you not heard? Danusia. Her father is Jurand of Spychow, a *comes*[18] mighty and gallant."

"Hej! Such a girl human eyes never saw before!"

"Everybody loves her for her singing and her beauty."

"And who is her knight?"

"She is only a child yet!"

Further conversation was stopped by Danusia's singing. Zbyszko looked at her fair hair, her uplifted head, her half-closed eyes, and at her whole figure lighted by the glare of the wax candles and by the glare of the moonbeams entering through the windows; and he wondered more and more. It seemed to him now, that he had seen her before; but he could not remember whether it was in a dream, or somewhere in Krakow on the pane of a church window.

And again he touched the courtier and asked in a low voice:

"Then she is from your court?"

"Her mother came from Litwa with the princess, Anna Danuta, who married her to Count Jurand of Spychow. She was pretty and belonged to a powerful family; the princess liked her better than any of the other young girls and she loved the princess. That is the reason she gave the same name to her daughter – Anna Danuta. But five years ago, when near Zlotorja, the Germans attacked the court, – she died from fear. Then the princess took the girl, and she has taken care of her since. Her father often comes to the court; he is glad that the princess is bringing his child up healthy and in happiness. But every time he looks at her, he cries, remembering his wife; then he returns to avenge on the Germans his awful wrong. He loved his wife more dearly than any one in the whole Mazowsze till now has loved; but he has killed in revenge a great many Germans."

In a moment Zbyszko's eyes were shining and the veins on his forehead swelled.

"Then the Germans killed her mother?" he asked.

"Killed and not killed. She died from fear. Five years ago there was peace; nobody was thinking about war and everybody felt safe. The prince went without any soldiers, only with the court, as usual during peace, to build a tower in Zlotorja. Those traitors, the Germans, fell upon them without any declaration of war, without any reason. They seized the prince himself, and remembering neither God's anger, nor that from the prince's ancestor, they had received great benefits, they bound him to a horse and slaughtered his people. The prince was a prisoner a long time, and only when King Wladyslaw threatened them with war, did they release him. During this attack Danusia's mother died."

"And you, sir, were you there? What do they call you? I have forgotten!"

"My name is Mikolaj of Dlugolas and they call me Obuch.[19] I was there. I saw a German with peacock feathers on his helmet, bind her to his saddle; and then she died from fear. They cut me with a halberd from which I have a scar."

Having said this he showed a deep scar on his head coming from beneath his hair to his eyebrows.

There was a moment of silence. Zbyszko was again looking at Danusia. Then he asked:

"And you said, sir, that she has no knight?"

But he did not receive any answer, because at that moment the singing stopped. One of the *rybals*, a fat and heavy man, suddenly rose, and the bench tilted to one side. Danusia tottered and stretched out her little hands, but before she could fall or jump, Zbyszko rushed up like a wild-cat and seized her in his arms.

The princess, who at first screamed from fear, laughed immediately and began to shout:

"Here is Danusia's knight! Come, little knight and give us back our dear little girl!"

"He grasped her boldly," some among the courtiers were heard to say.

Zbyszko walked toward the princess, holding Danusia to his breast, who having encircled his neck with one arm, held the lute with the other, being afraid it would be broken. Her face was smiling and pleased, although a little bit frightened.

In the meanwhile the youth came near the princess, put Danusia before her, kneeled, raised his head and said with remarkable boldness for his age:

"Let it be then according to your word, my gracious lady! It is time for this gentle young girl to have her knight, and it is time for me to have my lady, whose beauty and virtues I shall extol. With your permission, I wish to make a vow and I will remain faithful to her under all circumstances until death."

The princess was surprised, not on account of Zbyszko's words, but because everything had happened so suddenly. It is true that the custom of making vows was not Polish; but Mazowsze, being situated on the German frontier, and often being visited by the knights from remote countries, was more familiar with that custom than the other provinces, and imitated it very often. The princess had also heard about it in her father's court, where all eastern customs were considered as the law and the example for the noble warriors. Therefore she did not see in Zbyszko's action anything which could offend either herself or Danusia. She was even glad that her dear girl had attracted the heart and the eyes of a knight.

Therefore she turned her joyful face toward the girl.

"Danusia! Danusia! Do you wish to have your own knight?"

The fair-haired Danusia after jumping three times in her red shoes, seized the princess by the neck and began to scream with joy, as though they were promising her some pleasure permitted to the older people only.

"I wish, I wish – !"

The princess' eyes were filled with tears from laughing and the whole court laughed with her; then the lady said to Zbyszko:

"Well, make your vow! Make your vow! What will you promise her?"

But Zbyszko, who preserved his seriousness undisturbed amidst the laughter, said with dignity, while still kneeling:

"I promise that as soon as I reach Krakow, I will hang my spear on the door of the inn, and on it I will put a card, which a student in writing will write for me. On the card I will proclaim that Panna Danuta Jurandowna is the prettiest and most virtuous girl among all living in this or any other kingdom. Anyone who wishes to contradict this declaration, I will fight until one of us dies or is taken into captivity."

"Very well! I see you know the knightly custom. And what more?"

"I have learned from Pan Mikolaj of Dlugolas that the death of Panna Jurandowna's mother was caused by the brutality of a German who wore the crest of a peacock. Therefore I vow to gird my naked sides with a hempen rope, and even though it eat me to the bone, I will wear it until I tear three such tufts of feathers from the heads of German warriors whom I kill."

Here the princess became serious.

"Don't make any joke of your vows!"

And Zbyszko added:

"So help me God and holy cross, this vow I will repeat in church before a priest."

"It is a praiseworthy thing to fight against the enemy of our people; but I pity you, because you are young, and you can easily perish."

At that moment Macko of Bogdanice approached, thinking it proper to reassure the princess.

"Gracious lady, do not be frightened about that. Everybody must risk being killed in a fight, and it is a laudable end for a *wlodyka*, old or young. But war is not new nor strange to this man, because although he is only a youth, he has fought on horseback and on foot, with spear and with axe, with short sword and with long sword, with lance and without. It is a new custom, for a knight to vow to a girl whom he sees for the first time; but I do not blame Zbyszko for his promise. He has fought the Germans before. Let him fight them again, and if during that fight a few heads are broken, his glory will increase."

"I see that we have to do with a gallant knight," said the princess.

Then to Danusia, she said:

"Take my place as the first person to-day; only do not laugh because it is not dignified."

Danusia sat in the place of the lady; she wanted to be dignified, but her blue eyes were laughing at the kneeling Zbyszko, and she could not help moving her feet from joy.

"Give him your gloves," said the princess.

Danusia pulled off her gloves and handed them to Zbyszko who pressed them with great respect to his lips, and said:

"I will fix them on my helmet and woe to the one who stretches his hands for them!"

Then he kissed Danusia's hands and feet and arose. Then his dignity left him, and great joy filled his heart because from that time the whole court would consider him a mature man. Therefore shaking Danusia's gloves, he began to shout, half mirthfully, half angrily:

"Come, you dog-brothers with peacock's crests, come!"

But at that moment the same monk who had been there before entered the inn, and with him two superior ones. The servants of the monastery carried willow baskets which contained bottles of wine and some tidbits. The monks greeted the princess and again reproached her because she had not gone directly to the abbey. She explained to them again, that having slept during the day, she was traveling at night for coolness; therefore she did not need any sleep; and as she did not wish to awaken the worthy abbot nor the respectable monks, she preferred to stop in an inn to stretch her limbs.

After many courteous words, it was finally agreed, that after matins and mass in the morning, the princess with her court would breakfast and rest in the monastery. The affable monks also invited the Mazurs, the two noblemen and Macko of Bogdaniec who intended to go to the abbey to deposit his wealth acquired in the war and increased by Witold's munificent gift. This treasure was destined to redeem Bogdaniec from his pledge. But the young Zbyszko did not hear the invitation, because he had rushed to his wagon which was guarded by his servants, to procure better apparel for himself. He ordered his chests carried to a room in the inn and there he began to dress. At first he hastily combed his hair and put it in a silk net ornamented with amber beads, and in the front with real pearls. Then he put on a "*jaka*" of white silk embroidered with golden griffins; he girded himself with a golden belt from which was hanging a small sword in an ivory scabbard ornamented with gold. Everything was new, shining and unspotted with blood, although it had been taken as booty from a Fryzjan knight who served with the Knights of the Cross. Then Zbyszko put on beautiful trousers, one part having red and green stripes, the other part, yellow and purple, and both ended at the top like a checkered chessboard. After that he put on red shoes with long points. Fresh and handsome he went into the room.

In fact, as he stood in the door, his appearance made a great impression. The princess seeing now what a handsome knight had vowed to Danusia, was still more pleased. Danusia jumped toward him like a gazelle. But either the beauty of the young man or the sounds of admiration from the courtiers, caused her to pause before she reached him, drop her eyes suddenly and blushing and confused, begin to wring her fingers.

After her, came the others; the princess herself, the courtiers, the ladies-in-waiting, the *rybalts* and the monks all wanted to see him. The young Mazovian girls were looking at him as at a rainbow, each regretting that he had not chosen her; the older ones admired the costly dress; and thus, a circle of curious ones was formed around him. Zbyszko stood in the centre with a boastful smile on his youthful face, and turned himself slightly, so that they could see him better.

"Who is he?" asked one of the monks.

"He is a knight, nephew of that *wlodyka*" answered the princess, pointing to Macko; "he has made a vow to Danusia."

The monks did not show any surprise, because such a vow did not bind him to anything. Often vows were made to married women, and among the powerful families where the eastern custom was known, almost every woman had a knight. If a knight made a vow to a young girl, he did not thus become her fiancé; on the contrary he usually married another; he was constant to his vow, but did not hope to be wedded to her, but to marry another.

The monks were more astonished at Danusia's youth, and even not much at that, because in those times sixteen year old youths used to be castellans. The great Queen Jadwiga herself, when she came from Hungary, was only fifteen years old, and thirteen year old girls used to marry. At any rate, at that moment they were more occupied looking at Zbyszko than at Danusia; they also listened to Macko's words, who, proud of his nephew, was telling how the youth came in possession of such beautiful clothes.

"One year and nine weeks ago," said he, "we were invited by the Saxon knights. There was another guest, a certain knight, from a far Fryzjan nation, who lived there on the shores of a sea. With him was his son who was three years older than Zbyszko. Once at a banquet, that son began to taunt Zbyszko because he has neither moustache nor beard. Zbyszko being quick tempered, was very angry, and immediately seized him by his moustache, and pulled out all the hair. On account of that I afterward fought until death or slavery."

"What do you mean?" asked the Pan of Dlugolas.

"Because the father took his son's part and I took Zbyszko's part; therefore we fought, in the presence of the guests, on level ground. The agreement was, that the one who conquered, should take the wagons, horses, servants and everything that belonged to the vanquished one. God helped us. We killed those Fryzes, although with great labor, because they were brave and strong. We took much valuable booty; there were four wagons, each one drawn by two horses, four enormous stallions, ten servants, and two excellent suits of armor which are difficult to find. It is true we broke the helmets in the fight, but the Lord Jesus rewarded us with something else; there was a large chest of costly clothing; those in which Zbyszko is now dressed, we found there also."

Now the two noblemen from the vicinity of Krakow, and all the Mazurs began to look with more respect on both the uncle and the nephew, and the Pan of Dlugolas, called Obuch, said:

"I see you are terrible fellows, and not lazy."

"We now believe that this youngster will capture three peacocks' crests."

Macko laughed, and in his face there really appeared an expression similar to that on the face of a beast of prey.

But in the meanwhile, the servants of the monastery had taken the wine and the dainties from the willow baskets, and the servant girls were bringing large dishes full of steaming boiled eggs, surrounded by sausage, from which a strong and savory smell filled the whole room. This sight excited everybody's appetite, and they rushed to the tables.

But nobody sat down until the princess was seated at the head of the table; she told Zbyszko and Danusia to sit opposite her and then she said to Zbyszko:

"It is right for you both to eat from one dish; but do not step on her feet under the table, nor touch her with your knees, as the other knights do to their ladies, because she is too young."

To this he answered:

"I shall not do it, gracious lady, for two or three years yet, until the Lord Jesus permits me to accomplish my vow, and then this little berry will be ripe; as for stepping on her feet, even if I would like to do it I can not, because they do not touch the floor."

"True," answered the princess; "but it is pleasant to see that you have good manners."

Then there was silence because everybody was busy eating. Zbyszko picked the best pieces of sausage, which he handed to Danusia or put directly into her mouth; she was glad that such a famous knight served her.

After they had emptied the dishes, the servants of the monastery began to pour out the sweet-smelling wine – abundantly for the men, but not much for the ladies. Zbyszko's gallantry was particularly shown when they brought in the nuts which had been sent from the monastery. There were hazel nuts and some very rare nuts imported from afar, called Italians; they all feasted so willingly, that after awhile there was heard no sound in the whole room but the cracking of shells, crushed between the jaws. But Zbyszko did not think only about himself; he preferred to show to the princess and Danusia his knightly strength and abstinence. Therefore he did not put the nuts between his jaws, as the others did, but he crushed them between his fingers, and handed to Danusia the kernels picked from the shells. He even invented for her an amusement; after having picked out the kernel, he placed his hand near his mouth and, with his powerful blowing, he blew the shells to the ceiling. Danusia laughed so much, that the princess fearing that the young girl would choke, was obliged to ask him to stop the amusement; but perceiving how merry the girl was, she asked her:

"Well, Danusia, is it good to have your own knight?"

"Oj! Very!" answered the girl.

And then she touched Zbyszko's white silk "*jaka*" with her pink finger, and asked:

"And will he be mine to-morrow?"

"To-morrow, and Sunday, and until death," answered Zbyszko.

Supper lasted a long time, because after the nuts, sweet cakes with raisins were served. Some of the courtiers wished to dance; others wished to listen to the *rybalts* or to Danusia's singing; but she was tired, and having with great confidence put her little head on the knight's shoulder, she fell asleep.

"Does she sleep?" asked the princess. "There you have your 'lady.'"

"She is dearer to me while she sleeps than the others are while they dance," answered Zbyszko, sitting motionless so as not to awaken the girl.

But she was awakened neither by the *rybalts'* music nor by the singing. Some of the courtiers stamped, others rattled the dishes in time to the music; but the greater the noise, the better she slept.

She awoke only when the roosters, beginning to crow, and the church bell to ring, the company all rushed from the benches, shouting:

"To matins! To matins!"

"Let us go on foot for God's glory," said the princess.

She took the awakened Danusia by the hand and went out first, followed by the whole court.

The night was beginning to whiten. In the east one could see a light glare, green at the top, then pink below, and under all a golden red, which extended while one looked at it. It seemed as though the moon was retreating before that glare. The light grew pinker and brighter. Moist with dew, the rested and joyous world was awakening.

"God has given us fair weather, but there will be great heat," said the courtiers.

"No matter," answered the Pan of Dlugolas; "we will sleep in the abbey, and will reach Krakow toward evening."

"Sure of a feast."

"There is a feast every day now, and after the confinement and tournaments, there will be still greater ones."

"We shall see how Danusia's brave knight will acquit himself."

"Ej! They are of oak, those fellows! Did you hear what they said about that fight for four knights on each side?"

"Perhaps they will join our court; they are consulting with each other now."

In fact, they were talking earnestly with each other; old Macko was not very much pleased with what had happened; therefore while walking in the rear of the retinue, he said to his nephew:

"In truth, you don't need it. In some way I will reach the king and it may be he will give us something. I would be very glad to get to some castle or *grodek*[20] – Well we shall see. We will redeem Bogdaniec from our pledge anyhow, because we must hold that which our forefathers held. But how can we get some peasants to work? The land is worth nothing without peasants. Therefore listen to what I am going to tell you: if you make vows or not to anyone you please, still you must go with the Pan of Mielsztyn to Prince Witold against the Tartars. If they proclaim the expedition by the sound of trumpets before the queen's confinement, then do not wait either for the lying-in, or for the tournaments; only go, because there will be found some profit. Prince Witold is munificent, as you know; and he knows you. If you acquit yourself well, he will reward you liberally. Above all, if God help you, you will secure many slaves. The Tartars swarm in the world. In case of victory, every knight will capture three-score of them."

At this, Macko being covetous for land and serfs, began to fancy:

"If I could only catch fifty peasants and settle them in Bogdaniec! One would be able to clear up quite a piece of forest. You know that nowhere can you get as many as there."

But Zbyszko began to twist his head.

"Owa! I will bring hostlers from the stables living on horse carrion and not accustomed to working on the land! What use will they be in Bogdaniec? Then I vowed to capture three German crests. Where will I find them among the Tartars?"

"You made a vow because you were stupid; but your vow is not worth anything."

"But my honor of *wlodyka* and knight? What about that?"

"How was it with Ryngalla?"

"Ryngalla poisoned the prince, and the hermit gave me absolution."

"Then in Tyniec, the abbot will absolve you from this vow also. The abbot is greater than a hermit."

"I don't want absolution!"

Macko stopped and asked with evident anger:

"Then how will it be?"

"Go to Witold yourself, because I shall not go."

"You knave! And who will bow to the king? Don't you pity my bones?"

"Even if a tree should fall on your bones, it would not crush them; and even if I pity you, I will not go to Witold."

"What will you do then? Will you turn *rybalt* or falconer at the Mazowiecki court?"

"It's not a bad thing to be a falconer. But if you would rather grumble than to listen to me, then grumble."

"Where will you go? Don't you care for Bogdaniec? Will you plow with your nails without peasants?"

"Not true! You calculated cleverly about the Tartars! You have forgotten what the Rusini[21] told us, that it is difficult to catch any prisoners among the Tartars, because you cannot reach a Tartar on the steppes. On what will I chase them? On those heavy stallions that we captured from the Germans? Do you see? And what booty can I take? Scabby sheep-skin coats but nothing else! How rich then I shall return to Bogdaniec! Then they will call me *comes*!"

Macko was silent because there was a great deal of truth in Zbyszko's words; but after a while he said:

"But Prince Witold will reward you."

"Bah, you know; to one he gives too much, to another nothing."

"Then tell me, where will you go?"

"To Jurand of Spychow."

Macko angrily twisted the belt of his leather jacket, and said:

"May you become a blind man!"

"Listen," answered Zbyszko quietly. "I had a talk with Mikolaj of Dlugolas and he said that Jurand is seeking revenge on the Germans for the death of his wife. I will go and help him. In the first place, you said yourself that it was nothing strange for us to fight the Germans because we know them and their ways so well. *Secundo*, I will thus more easily capture those peacock's crests; and *tercio*, you know that peacock's crests are not worn by knaves; therefore if the Lord Jesus will help me to secure the crests, it will also bring booty. Finally: the slaves from those parts are not like the Tartars. If you settle such slaves in a forest, then you will accomplish something."

"Man, are you crazy? There is no war at present and God knows when there will be!"

"How clever you are! The bears make peace with the bee-keepers and they neither spoil the beehives, nor eat the honey! Ha! ha! ha! Then it is news to you, that although the great armies are not fighting and although the king and the grand master stamped the parchment with their seals, still there is always great disturbance on the frontiers? If some cattle are seized, they burn several villages for one cow's head and besiege the castles. How about capturing peasants and their girls? About merchants on the highways? Remember former times, about which you told me yourself. That Nalencz, who captured forty knights going to join the Knights of the Cross, and kept them in prison until the grand master sent him a cart full of *grzywien*;<sup>[22]</sup> did he not do a good business? Jurand of Spychow is doing the same and on the frontier the work is always ready."

For a while they walked along silently; in the meanwhile, it was broad daylight and the bright rays of the sun lighted up the rocks on which the abbey was built.

"God can give good luck in any place," Macko said, finally, with a calm voice; "pray that he may bless you."

"Sure; all depends on his favor!"

"And think about Bogdaniec, because you cannot persuade me that you go to Jurand of Spychow for the sake of Bogdaniec and not for that duck's beak."

"Don't speak that way, because it makes me angry. I will see her gladly and I do not deny it. Have you ever met a prettier girl?"

"What do I care for her beauty! Better marry her, when she is grown up; she is the daughter of a mighty *comes*."

Zbyszko's face brightened with a pleasant smile.

"It must be. No other lady, no other wife! When your bones are old, you shall play with the grandchildren born to her and myself."

Now Macko smiled also and said:

"Grady! Grady!<sup>[23]</sup> – May they be as numerous as hail. When one is old, they are his joy; and after death, his salvation. Jesus, grant us this!"

## CHAPTER III

Princess Danuta, Macko and Zbyszko had been in Tyniec before; but in the train of attendants there were some courtiers who now saw it for the first time; these greatly admired the magnificent abbey which was surrounded by high walls built over the rocks and precipices, and stood on a lofty mountain now shining in the golden rays of the rising sun. The stately walls and the buildings devoted to various purposes, the gardens situated at the foot of the mountain and the carefully cultivated fields, showed immediately the great wealth of the abbey. The people from poor Mazowsze were amazed. It is true there were other mighty Benedictine abbeys in other parts of the country; as for instance in Lubusz on Odra, in Plock, in Wielkopolska, in Mogila and in several other places: but none of them could compare with the abbey in Tyniec, which was richer than many principalities, and had an income greater than even the kings of those times possessed.

Therefore the astonishment increased among the courtiers and some of them could scarcely believe their own eyes. In the meanwhile, the princess wishing to make the journey pleasant, and to interest the young ladies, begged one of the monks to relate the awful story about Walgierz Wdaly which had been told to her in Krakow, although not very correctly.

Hearing this, the ladies surrounded the princess and walked slowly, looking in the rays of the sun like moving flowers.

"Let Brother Hidulf tell about Walgierz, who appeared to him on a certain night," said one of the monks, looking at one of the other monks who was an old man.

"Pious father, have you seen him with your own eyes?" asked the princess.

"I have seen him," answered the monk gloomily; "there are certain moments during which, by God's will, he is permitted to leave the underground regions of hell and show himself to the world."

"When does it happen?"

The old monk looked at the other monks and became silent. There was a tradition that the ghost of Walgierz appeared when the morals of the monastic lives became corrupted, and when the monks thought more about worldly riches and pleasures than was right.

None of them, however, wished to tell this; but it was also said that the ghost's appearance portended war or some other calamity. Brother Hidulf, after a short silence, said:

"His appearance does not foretell any good fortune."

"I would not care to see him," said the princess, making the sign of the cross; "but why is he in hell, if it is true as I heard, that he only avenged a wrong?"

"Had he been virtuous during his whole life," said the monk sternly, "he would be damned just the same because he was a heathen, and original sin was not washed out by baptism."

After those words the princess' brows contracted painfully because she recollected that her father whom she loved dearly, had died in the heathen's errors also.

"We are listening," said she, after a short silence.

Brother Hidulf began thus:

During the time of heathenism, there was a mighty *grabia*[24] whose name was Walgierz, whom on account of his great beauty, they called Wdaly.[25] This whole country, as far as one can see, belonged to him, and he led all the expeditions, the people on foot and a hundred spearmen who were all *wlodykas*; the men to the east as far as Opole, and to the west as far as Sandomierz, were his vassals. Nobody was able to count his herds, and in Tyniec he had a towerful of money the same as the Knights of the Cross have now in Marienburg."

"Yes, they have, I know it!" interrupted the princess.

"He was a giant," continued the monk. "He was so strong he could dig up an oak tree by the roots, and nobody in the whole world could compare with him for beauty, playing on the lute or singing. One time when he was at the court of a French king, the king's daughter, Helgunda, fell in love

with him, and ran away with him to Tyniec, where they lived together in sin. No priest would marry them with Christian rites, because Helgunda's father had promised her to the cloister for the glory of God. At the same time, there lived in Wislica, Wislaw Piekny,[26] who belonged to King Popiel's family. He, while Walgierz Wdaly was absent, devastated the county around Tyniec. Walgierz when he returned overpowered Wislaw and imprisoned him in Tyniec. He did not take into consideration this fact: that every woman as soon as she saw Wislaw, was ready immediately to leave father, mother and even husband, if she could only satisfy her passion. This happened to Helgunda. She immediately devised such fetters for Walgierz, that that giant, although he could pluck an oak up by its roots, was unable to break them. She gave him to Wislaw, who took and imprisoned him in Wislica. There Rynga, Wislaw's sister, having heard Walgierz singing in his underground cell, soon fell in love with him and set him at liberty. He then killed Wislaw and Helgunda with the sword, left their bodies for the crows, and returned to Tyniec with Rynga."

"Was it not right, what he did?" asked the princess.

Brother Hidulf answered:

"Had he received baptism and given Tyniec to the Benedictines, perhaps God would have forgiven his sins; but he did not do this, therefore the earth has devoured him."

"Were the Benedictines in this kingdom at that time?"

"No, the Benedictines were not here; only the heathen lived here then."

"How then could he receive baptism, or give up Tyniec?"

"He could not; and that is exactly why he was sent to hell to endure eternal torture," answered the monk with authority.

"Sure! He speaks rightly!" several voices were heard to say.

In the meanwhile they approached the principal gate of the monastery, where the abbot with numerous monks and noblemen, was awaiting the princess. There were always many lay people in the cloister: land stewards, barristers and procurators. Many noblemen, even powerful *wlodykas*, held in fief from the monastery numerous estates; and these, as "vassals," were glad to pass their time at the court of their "suzerain," where near the main altar it was easy to obtain some gift and many benefits. Therefore the "*abbas centum villarum*"[27] could greet the princess with a numerous retinue.

He was a man of great stature, with a thin, intelligent face; his head was shaved on the top with a fringe of grey hair beneath. He had a deep scar on his forehead, which he had evidently received during his youth when he performed knightly deeds. His eyes looked penetratingly from beneath dark eyebrows. He wore a monk's dress similar to that worn by the other monks, but over it he wore a black mantle, lined with purple; around his neck was a gold chain from which was hanging a gold cross set with precious stones. His whole figure betrayed a proud man, accustomed to command and one who had confidence in himself.

But he greeted the princess affably and even humbly, because he remembered that her husband belonged to the family of the princes of Mazowsze, from which came the kings, Wladyslaw and Kazimierz; and that her mother was the reigning queen of one of the most powerful kingdoms in the world. Therefore he passed the threshold of the gate, bowed low, and then having made the sign of the cross over Anna Danuta and over her court, he said;

"Welcome, gracious lady, to the threshold of this poor monastery. May Saint Benedictus of Nursja, Saint Maurus, Saint Bonifacius, Saint Benedictus of Aniane and also Jean of Tolomeia – our patrons living in eternal glory, – give you health and happiness, and bless you seven times a day during the remainder of your life."

"They would be deaf, if they did not hear the words of such a great abbot," said the princess affably; "we came here to hear mass, during which we will place ourselves under their protection."

Having said this she stretched her hand toward him, which he falling upon one knee, kissed in knightly manner. Then they passed through the gate. The monks were waiting to celebrate mass, because immediately the bells were rung; the trumpeters blew near the church door in honor of the

princess. Every church used to make a great impression on the princess who had not been born in a Christian country. The church in Tyniec impressed her greatly, because there were very few churches that could rival it in magnificence. Darkness filled the church except at the main altar where many lights were shining, brightening the carvings and gildings. A monk, dressed in a chasuble, came from the vestry, bowed to the princess and commenced mass. Then the smoke from the fragrant incense arose, veiled the priest and the altar, and mounted in quiet clouds to the vaulted ceiling, increasing the solemn beauty of the church. Anna Danuta bent her head and prayed fervently. But when an organ, rare in those times, began to shake the nave with majestic thunderings, filling it with angelic voices, then the princess raised her eyes, and her face expressed, beside devotion and fear, a boundless delight; and one looking at her would take her for some saint, who sees in a marvelous vision, the open heaven.

Thus prayed Kiejstut's daughter, who born in heathenism, in everyday life mentioned God's name just as everybody else did in those times, familiarly; but in the Lord's house she used to raise her eyes with fear and humility, toward his secret and unmeasurable power.

The whole court, although with less humility, prayed devoutly. Zbyszko knelt among the Mazurs, and committed himself to God's protection. From time to time he glanced at Danusia who was sitting beside the princess; he considered it an honor to be the knight of such a girl, and that his vow was not a trifle. He had already girded his sides with a hempen rope, but this was only half of his vow; now it was necessary to fulfill the other half which was more difficult. Consequently now, when he was more serious than when in the inn drinking beer, he was anxious to discover how he could fulfill it. There was no war. But amidst the disturbances on the frontier, it was possible to meet some Germans, and either kill them or lay down his own life.

He had told this to Macko. But he thought: "Not every German wears peacock or ostrich feathers on his helmet. Only a few among the guests of the Knights of the Cross are counts, and the Knights of the Cross themselves are only *comthurs*; and not every one of them is a *comthur* either. If there be no war, then years may pass before I shall get those three crests; I have not been knighted yet and can challenge only those who are not knights like myself. It is true I expect to receive the girdle of a knight from the king's hands during the tournaments, which have been announced to take place during the christening, but what will happen then? I will go to Jurand of Sychow; he will help me kill as many *knechts*[28] as possible; but that will benefit me little. The *knechts* are not knights, with peacock feathers on their heads."

Therefore in his uncertainty, seeing that without God's special favor, he could do nothing, he began to pray:

"Jesus, grant a war between the Knights of the Cross and the Germans who are the foes of this kingdom and of all other nations confessing Your Holy Name. Bless us; but crush them who would rather serve the *starosta*[29] of hell, than serve you; they have hatred in their hearts against us, being angry because our king and queen, having baptized the Lithuanians, forbade them cut your Christian servants with the sword. For which anger punish them!"

"And I, Zbyszko a sinner, repent before you and from your five wounds beseech for help, that in your mercy you permit me to kill as soon as possible three Germans having peacock feathers on their morions. These crests I promised upon my knightly honor to Panna Anna Danuta, Jurand's daughter, and your servant."

"If I shall find any booty on those defeated Germans, I shall faithfully pay to holy church the tithe, in order that you also, sweet Jesus, may have some benefit and glory through me; and also that you may know, that I promise to you with a sincere heart. As this is true, so help me, amen!"

But as he prayed, his heart softened under the influence of his devotions and he made another promise, which was that after having redeemed Bogdaniec from its pledge, he would give to the church all the wax which the bees could make during the whole year. He hoped that his Uncle Macko would not make any opposition to this, and that the Lord Jesus would be especially pleased with the

wax for the candles, and wishing to get it, would help him sooner. This thought seemed to him so right, that joy filled his soul; and he was almost sure that his prayer would be heard and that the war would soon come, so that he could accomplish his vow. He felt such might in his legs and in his arms, that at that moment he would have attacked a whole army. He even thought that having increased his promises to God, he would also add for Danusia, a couple of Germans! His youthful anger urged him to do it, but this time prudence prevailed, as he was afraid to exhaust God's patience by asking too much.

His confidence increased, however, when after mass and a long rest, he heard the conversation between the abbot and Anna Danuta.

The wives of the reigning kings and princes, both on account of devotion as well as on account of the magnificent presents, sent them by the Master of the Order, were very kindly disposed toward the Knights of the Cross. Even the pious Jadwiga, as long as she lived, restrained her husband's anger against them. Anna Danuta alone, having experienced dreadful wrongs from the knights hated them with her whole soul. Therefore when the abbot asked her about Mazowsze and its affairs, she began to complain bitterly against the Order:

"Our affairs are in a bad condition and it cannot be otherwise with such neighbors! Apparently it is the time of peace; they exchange ambassadors and letters, but notwithstanding all that nobody can be sure of anything. The one who lives on the borders of the kingdom, never knows when he goes to bed in the evening, whether he will awaken in fetters, or with the blade of a sword in his throat, or with a burning ceiling over his head. Neither oaths, nor seals, nor parchment will protect from treachery. Thus it happened at Zlotorja where during the time of peace, they seized the prince and imprisoned him. The Knights of the Cross said that our castle was a menace to them; but the castles are repaired for defence not for an onset; and what prince has not the right to build and repair in his own land? Neither the weak nor the powerful can agree with the Order, because the knights despise the weak and try to ruin the mighty. Good deeds they repay with evil ones. Is there anywhere in the world another order which has received as many benefits from other kingdoms as the knights have received from Polish princes? And how have they repaid? With threats, with devastation of our lands, with war and with treachery. And it is useless to complain, even to our apostolic capital, because they do not listen to the Roman pope himself. Apparently they have sent an embassy now for the queen's confinement and the expected christening, but only because they wish to appease the anger of this mighty king for the evil deeds they performed in Litwa. But in their hearts they are always plotting means to annihilate this kingdom and the whole Polish nation."

The abbot listened attentively with approval and then said:

"I know that Comthur Lichtenstein came to Krakow at the head of the embassy; he is very much respected in the Order for his bravery and intelligence. Perhaps you will see him here soon, gracious lady, because he sent me a message yesterday, saying that as he wished to pray to our holy relics, he would pay a visit to Tyniec."

Having heard this, the princess began to complain again:

"The people say – and I am sure rightly – that there will soon be a great war, in which on one side will be the kingdom of Poland and all the nations speaking a language similar to the Polish tongue, and on the other side will be all the Germans and the Order. There is a prophecy about this war by some saint."

"Bridget," interrupted the scholarly abbot; "eight years ago she was canonized. The pious Peter from Alvastra and Matthew from Linköping have written her revelations, in which a great war has been predicted."

Zbyszko shuddered at these words, and not being able to restrain himself, asked:

"How soon will it be?"

But the abbot being occupied with the princess, did not hear, or probably did not wish to hear, the question.

The princess spoke further:

"Our young knights are glad that this war is coming, but the older and prudent ones speak thus: 'We are not afraid of the Germans, although their pride and power are great, but we are afraid of their relics, because against those all human might is powerless.'"

Here Anna Danuta looked at the abbot with fear and added in a softer voice:

"They say they have a true piece of the holy cross; how then can one fight against them?"

"The French king sent it to them," answered the abbot.

There was a moment of silence, then Mikolaj of Dlugolas, called Obuch, a man of great experience, said:

"I was in captivity among the Knights of the Cross; I saw a procession in which they carried this great relic. But beside this, there are many other relics in the monastery in Oliva without which the order would not have acquired such power."

The Benedictines stretched their necks toward the speaker, and began to ask with great curiosity:

"Tell us, what are they?"

"There is a piece of the dress of the Most Holy Virgin," answered the *wlodyka* of Dlugolas; "there is a molar tooth of Marya from Magdala and branches from the bush in which God the Father revealed himself to Moses; there is a hand of Saint Liberjus, and as for the bones of other saints, I cannot count them on the fingers of both hands and the toes of both feet."

"How can one fight them?" repeated the princess, sighing.

The abbot frowned, and having thought for awhile, said:

"It is difficult to fight them, for this reason; they are monks and they wear the cross on their mantles; but if they have exceeded the measure of their sins, then even those relics will refuse to remain with them; in that case they will not strengthen the knights, but will take their strength away, so that the relics can pass into more pious hands. May God spare Christian blood; but, if a great war should come, there are some relics in our kingdom also which will succor us."

"May God help us!" exclaimed Zbyszko.

The abbot turned toward the princess and said:

"Therefore have confidence in God, gracious lady, because their days are numbered rather than yours. In the meanwhile, accept with grateful heart this box, in which there is a finger of Saint Ptolomeus, one of our patrons."

The princess extended her hand and kneeling, accepted the box, which she immediately pressed to her lips. The courtiers shared the joy of the lady. Zbyszko was happy because it seemed to him that war would come immediately after the Krakowian festivals.

## CHAPTER IV

It was in the afternoon that the princess left hospitable Tyniec and went toward Krakow. Often the knights of those times, coming into larger cities or castles to visit some eminent person, used to put on their entire battle armor. It is true it was customary to take it off immediately after they arrived at the gates; in fact it was the custom for the host himself to invite them to remove it in these words: "Take off your armor, noble lord; you have come to friends!" This entrance was considered to be more dignified and to increase the importance of the knight. To conform with this ostentatious custom Macko and Zbyszko took with them those excellent suits of armor and shoulder-bands – won from the conquered Fryzjan knights, – bright, shining and ornamented on the edges with a gold band. Mikolaj of Dlugolas, who had seen the world and many knights, and was very expert in judging war things, immediately recognized that the suits of armor had been made by a most famous armorer of Milan; armor which only the richest knights could afford; each of them being worth quite a fortune. He concluded that those Fryzes were mighty lords among their own people, and he looked with more respect on Macko and Zbyszko. Their helmets, although not common ones, were not so rich; but their gigantic stallions, beautifully caparisoned, excited envy and admiration among the courtiers. Macko and Zbyszko, sitting on very high saddles, could look down proudly at the whole court. Each held in his hand a long spear; each had a sword at his side and an axe at the saddlebow. For the sake of comfort they had left their shields in the wagons, but even without them, both men looked as though they were going to battle and not to the city.

Both were riding near the carriage, in which was seated the princess, accompanied by Danusia, and in front of them a dignified court lady, Ofka, the widow of Krystyn of Jarzombkow and the old Mikolaj of Dlugolas. Danusia looked with great interest at the two iron knights, and the princess, pulling from time to time the box with the relics of Saint Ptolomeus from her bosom, raised it to her lips.

"I am very anxious to see what bones are inside," said she, "but I will not open it myself, for I do not want to offend the saint; the bishop in Krakow will open it."

To this the cautious Mikolaj of Dlugolas answered:

"Ej, it will be better not to let this go out of your hands; it is too precious a thing."

"May be you are right," said the princess, after a moment of reflection; then she added:

"For a long time nobody has given me such pleasure, as this worthy abbot has by this present; and he also calmed my fears about the relics of the Knights of the Cross."

"He spoke wisely and well," said Macko of Bogdaniec. "At Wilno they also had different relics, and they wanted to persuade the guests that they were at war with the heathen. And what? Our knights noticed that if they could only make a blow with an axe, immediately the helmet gave way and the head fell down. The saints help – it would be a sin to say differently – but they only help the righteous, who go to war justly in God's name. Therefore, gracious lady, I think that if there be another war, even if all Germans help the Knights of the Cross, we will overcome them, because our nation is greater and the Lord Jesus will give us more strength in our bones. As for the relics, – have we not a true particle of the holy cross in the monastery of Holy Cross?"

"It is true, as God is dear to me," said the princess. "But ours will remain in the monastery, while if necessary they carry theirs."

"No matter! There is no limit to God's power."

"Is that true? Tell me; how is it?" asked the princess, turning to the wise Mikolaj of Dlugolas; and he said:

"Every bishop will affirm it. Rome is distant too, and yet the pope rules over the whole world; cannot God do more!"

These words soothed the princess so completely that she began to converse about Tyniec and its magnificence. The Mazurs were astonished not only at the riches of the abbey, but also at the wealth and beauty of the whole country through which they were now riding. All around were many flourishing villages; near them were orchards full of trees, linden groves, storks' nests on the linden trees, and beneath the trees were beehives with straw roofs. Along the highway on both sides, there were fields of all kinds of grain. From time to time, the wind bent the still greenish sea of grain, amidst which shone like the stars in the sky, the blue heads of the flowers of the bachelor button, and the light red wild poppies. Far beyond the fields appeared the woods, black in the distance but bathed in sunlight; here and there appeared moist meadows, full of grass and birds flying round the bushes; then appeared hills with houses; again fields; and as far as one could see, the country appeared to flow not only with milk and honey but also with quiet and happiness.

"That is King Kazimierz' rural economy," said the princess; "it must be a pleasure to live here."

"Lord Jesus rejoices to see such a country," answered Mikolaj of Dlugolas; "and God's blessing is over it; but how can it be different; when they ring the bells here, there is no corner where they cannot be heard! And it is known that no evil spirit can endure the ringing of the bells, and they are obliged to escape to the forests on the Hungarian frontier."

"I wonder," said Pani Ofka, the widow of Krystyn of Jarzombkow, "how Walgierz Wdaly, about whom the monk was talking, can appear in Tyniec, where they ring the bells seven times a day."

This remark embarrassed Mikolaj for a moment, who after thinking, quietly said:

"In the first place, God's decrees are not well known; and then you must remember that every time he appears he has had special permission."

"At any rate, I am glad that we shall not pass the night in the monastery. I would die from fear if I saw such an infernal giant."

"Hej! I doubt it, because they say, he is very handsome."

"If he were very beautiful, I would not want a kiss from such a man, from whose mouth one could smell sulphur."

"I see that when the conversation is even about devils, you are still thinking about kisses."

At these words the princess, Pan Mikolaj and both *wlodykas* of Bogdaniec began to laugh. Danusia laughed also, following the example of the others. But Ofka of Jarzombkow turned her angry face toward Mikolaj of Dlugolas, and said:

"I should prefer him to you."

"Ej! Don't call the wolf out of the forest;" answered the merry Mazur; "the ghost often wanders on the high road, between Krakow and Tyniec, especially toward night; suppose he should hear you and appear to you in the form of a giant!"

"Let the enchantment go on the dog!" answered Ofka.

But at that moment Macko of Bogdaniec, who being seated on a high stallion, could see further than those who were in the carriage, reined in his horse, and said:

"O, as God is dear to me, what is it?"

"What?"

"Some giant of the forest is coming!"

"And the word became flesh!" exclaimed the princess. "Don't say that!"

But Zbyszko arose in his stirrups and said:

"It is true; the giant Walgierz; nobody else!"

At this the coachman reined in the horses, but not dropping the reins, began to make the sign of the cross, because he also perceived on an opposite hill the gigantic figure of a horseman.

The princess had risen; but now she sat down, her face changed with fear. Danusia hid her face in the folds of the princess' dress. The courtiers, ladies and *rybalts*, who were on horseback behind the carriage, having heard the ill-omened name, began to surround the carriage. The men tried to

laugh, but there was fear in their eyes; the young girls were pale; only Mikolaj of Dlugolas maintained his composure and wishing to tranquilize the princess, said:

"Don't be frightened, gracious lady. The sun has not yet set; and even if it were night, Saint Ptolomeus will manage Walgierz."

In the meanwhile, the unknown horseman, having mounted the top of the hill, stopped his horse and stood motionless. In the rays of the setting sun, one could see him very distinctly; his stature seemed greater than ordinary human dimensions. The space separating him from the princess' retinue was not more than three hundred steps.

"Why is he stopping?" asked one of the *rybalts*.

"Because we stopped," answered Macko.

"He is looking toward us as if he would like to choose somebody," said another *rybalt*; "if I were sure he was a man and not an evil spirit, I would go and give him a blow on the head with the lute."

The women began to pray aloud, but Zbyszko wishing to show his courage to the princess and Danusia, said:

"I will go just the same. I am not afraid of Walgierz!"

Danusia began to scream: "Zbyszko! Zbyszko!" But he went forward and rode swiftly, confident that even if he did meet the true Walgierz, he could pierce him through and through with his spear.

Macko who had sharp sight, said:

"He appears like a giant because he is on the hill. It is some big man, but an ordinary one, nothing else! Owa! I am going also, to see that he does not quarrel with Zbyszko."

Zbyszko, while riding was debating whether he should immediately attack with the spear, or whether first take a close view of the man standing on the hill. He decided to view him first, and immediately persuaded himself that it was the better thought, because as he approached, the stranger began to lose his extraordinary size. He was a large man and was mounted on a large horse, which was bigger than Zbyszko's stallion; yet he did not exceed human size. Besides that he was without armor, with a velvet cap shaped like a bell on his head; he wore a white linen dust cloak, from beneath which a green dress could be seen. While standing on the hill he was praying. Evidently he had stopped his horse to finish his evening devotions.

"It is not Walgierz," thought the boy.

He had approached so close that he could touch the unknown man with his spear. The man who evidently was a knight, smiled at him benevolently, and said:

"May Jesus Christ be praised!"

"For ages and ages."

"Is that the court of the Princess of Mazowsze below?"

"Yes, it is!"

"Then you come from Tyniec?"

But he did not receive any answer, because Zbyszko was so much surprised that he did not even hear the question. For a moment he stood like a statue, scarcely believing his own eyes, for, behold! about half a furlong behind the unknown man, he perceived several soldiers on horseback, at the head of whom was riding a knight clad in full armor, with a white cloth mantle with a red cross on it, and with a steel helmet having a magnificent peacock tuft in the crest.

"A Knight of the Cross!" whispered Zbyszko. Now he thought that God had heard his prayers; that he had sent him the German knight for whom he had asked in Tyniec. Surely he must take advantage of God's kindness; therefore without any hesitation, – before all these thoughts had hardly passed through his head, before his astonishment had diminished, – he bent low on the saddle, let down his spear and having uttered his family shout: "Grady! Grady!" he rushed with the whole speed of his horse against the Knight of the Cross.

That knight was astonished also; he stopped his horse, and without lowering his spear, looked in front of him, uncertain whether the attack was against him or not.

"Lower your spear!" shouted Zbyszko, pricking his horse with the iron points of the stirrups.  
"Grady! Grady!"

The distance separating them began to diminish. The Knight of the Cross seeing that the attack was really against him, reined in his horse and poised his spear. At the moment that Zbyszko's lance was nearly touching his chest, a powerful hand broke it like a reed; then the same hand reined in Zbyszko's horse with such force, that the charger stopped as though rooted to the ground.

"You crazy man, what are you doing?" said a deep, threatening voice; "you are attacking an envoy, you are insulting the king!"

Zbyszko glanced around and recognized the same gigantic man, whom he had taken for Walgierz, and who had frightened the princess and her court.

"Let me go against the German! Who are you?" he cried, seizing his axe.

"Away with the axe! for God's sake! Away with the axe, I say! I will throw you from your horse!" shouted the stranger more threateningly. "You have offended the majesty of the king and you will be punished."

Then he turned toward the soldiers who were riding behind the Knight of the Cross.

"Come here!"

"At this time Macko appeared and his face looked threatening. He understood that Zbyszko had acted like a madman and that the consequences of this affair might be very serious; but he was ready to defend him just the same. The whole retinue of the stranger and of the Knight of the Cross contained only fifteen men, armed with spears and crossbows; therefore two knights in full armors could fight them with some hope of being victorious. Macko also thought that as they were threatened with punishment, it would be better perhaps to avoid it, by overcoming these men, and then hiding somewhere until the storm had passed over. Therefore his face immediately contracted, like the jaws of a wolf ready to bite, and having pushed his horse between Zbyszko and the stranger's horse, he began to ask, meanwhile handling his sword:

"Who are you? What right have you to interfere?"

"My right is this," said the stranger, "that the king has intrusted to me the safety of the environs of Krakow, and they call me Powala of Taczew."

At these words, Macko and Zbyszko glanced at the knight, then returned to their scabbards the half drawn swords and dropped their heads, not because they were frightened but in respect for this famous and very well-known name. Powala of Taczew, a nobleman of a powerful family and a mighty lord, possessor of large estates round Radom, was at the same time one of the most famous knights in the kingdom. *Rybalts* sang about him in their songs, citing him as an example of honor and gallantry, praising his name as much as the names of Zawisza of Garbow and Farurej, Skarbek of Gora, Dobek of Olesnica, Janko Nanszan, Mikolaj of Moskorzowo, and Zandram of Maszkowic. At this moment he was the representative of the king, therefore to attack him was to put one's head under the executioner's axe.

Macko becoming cooler, said with deep respect:

"Honor and respect to you, sir, to your fame and to your gallantry."

"Honor to you also, sir," answered Powala; "but I would prefer to make your acquaintance under less serious circumstances."

"Why?" asked Macko.

Powala turned toward Zbyszko.

"What have you done, you youngster? You attacked an envoy on the public highway in the king's presence! Do you know the consequences of such an act?"

"He attacked the envoy because he was young and stupid; therefore action was easier for him than reflection," said Macko. "But you will not judge him so severely, after I tell you the whole story."

"It is not I who will judge him. My business is only to put him in fetters."

"How is that?" said Macko, looking gloomy again.

"According to the king's command."

Silence followed these words.

"He is a nobleman," said Macko finally.

"Let him swear then upon his knightly honor, that he will appear at the court."

"I swear!" exclaimed Zbyszko.

"Very well. What do they call you?"

Macko mentioned the name and the coat of arms of his nephew.

"If you belong to Princess Janusz' court, beg her to intercede for you with the king."

"We are not with her court. We are returning from Litwa, from Prince Witold. Better for us if we had never met any court! This misfortune has come from that."

Here Macko began to tell about what had happened in the inn; he spoke about the meeting with the princess and about Zbyszko's vow. Then suddenly he was filled with anger against Zbyszko, whose imprudence had caused their present dreadful plight; therefore, turning toward him, he exclaimed:

"I would have preferred to see you dead at Wilno! What have you done, you young of a wild boar!"

"Well," said Zbyszko, "after the vow, I prayed to the Lord Jesus to give me some Germans; I promised him a present; therefore when I perceived the peacock feathers, and also a mantle embroidered with a cross, immediately some voice cried within me: 'Strike the German! It is a miracle!' Well I rushed forward then; who would not have done it?"

"Listen," interrupted Powala, "I do not wish you any evil. I see clearly that this youngster sinned rather from youthful giddiness than from malice. I will be only too glad to ignore his deed and go forward as if nothing had happened. But I cannot do this unless that *comthur* will promise that he will not complain to the king. Beseech him; perhaps he also will pity the lad."

"I prefer to go before the courts, than to bow to a *Krzyzak*!"[30] exclaimed Zbyszko. "It would not be befitting my dignity as a *wlodyka*."

Powala of Taczew looked at him severely and said:

"You do not act wisely. Old people know better than you, what is right and what is befitting a knight's dignity. People have heard about me; but I tell you, that if I had acted as you have, I would not be ashamed to ask forgiveness for such an offence."

Zbyszko felt ashamed; but having glanced around, answered:

"The ground is level here. Instead of asking him for forgiveness, I would prefer to fight him on horseback or on foot, till death or slavery."

"You are stupid!" interrupted Macko. "You wish then to fight the envoy?"

Here he turned to Powala:

"You must excuse him, noble lord. He became wild during the war. It will be better if he does not speak to the German, because he may insult him. I will do it. I will entreat him to forgive. If this *comthur* be willing to settle it by combat, after his mission is over, I will meet him."

"He is a knight of a great family; he will not encounter everybody," answered Powala.

"What? Do I not wear a girdle and spurs? Even a prince may meet me."

"That is true; but do not tell him that, unless he mentions it himself; I am afraid he will become angry if you do. Well, may God help you!"

"I am going to humiliate myself for your sake," said Macko to Zbyszko; "wait awhile!"

He approached the Knight of the Cross who had remained motionless on his enormous stallion, looking like an iron statue, and had listened with the greatest indifference to the preceding conversation. Macko having learned German during the long wars, began to explain to the *comthur* in his own language what had happened; he excused the boy on account of his youth and violent temper, and said that it had seemed to the boy as though God himself had sent the knight wearing a peacock tuft, and finally he begged forgiveness for the offence.

The *comthur's* face did not move. Calm and haughty he looked at Macko with his steely eyes with great indifference, but also with great contempt. The *wlodyka* of Bogdaniec noticed this. His words continued to be courteous but his soul began to rebel. He talked with increasing constraint and his swarthy face flushed. It was evident that in the presence of this haughty pride, Macko was endeavoring to restrain his anger.

Powala having noticed this, and having a kind heart, determined to help Macko. He had learned to speak German while seeking knightly adventures at the Hungarian, Burgundian and Bohemian courts, when he was young. Therefore he now said in that language in a conciliatory but jesting tone:

"You see, sir, the noble *comthur* thinks that the whole affair is unimportant. Not only in our kingdom but in every country the youths are slightly crazy; but such a noble knight does not fight children, neither by sword nor by law."

Lichtenstein touched his yellow moustache and moved on without a word, passing Macko and Zbyszko.

A dreadful wrath began to raise the hair under their helmets, and their hands grasped their swords.

"Wait, you scoundrel!" said the elder *wlodyka* through his set teeth; "now I will make a vow to you. I will seek you as soon as you have finished your mission."

But Powala, whose heart began to bleed also, said:

"Wait! Now the princess must speak in favor of the boy; otherwise, woe to him!"

Having said this, he followed the Knight of the Cross, stopped him and for a while they talked with great animation. Macko and Zbyszko noticed that the German knight did not look at Powala so proudly as he had at them; this made them still more angry. After a while, Powala returned and said to them:

"I tried to intercede for you, but he is a hard man. He said that he would not complain to the king if you would do what he requires."

"What?"

"He said thus: 'I will stop to greet the Princess of Mazowsze; let them come, dismount, take off their helmets, and standing on the ground with uncovered heads, ask my forgiveness.'"

Here Powala looked sharply at Zbyszko, and added:

"I know it will be hard for people of noble birth to do this; but I must warn you, that if you refuse no one knows what you may expect, – perhaps the executioner's sword."

The faces of Macko and Zbyszko became like stone. There was silence.

"What then?" asked Powala.

Zbyszko answered quietly and with great dignity as though during this conversation he had grown twenty years older:

"Well, God's might is over all!"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, that even if I had two heads and the executioner was going to cut off both, still I have only one honor which I will not stain."

Powala became grave and turning toward Macko, asked:

"And what do you say?"

"I say," answered Macko gloomily, "that I reared this youth from childhood. On him depends our family, because I am old; but he cannot do what the German asks, even if he must perish."

Here his grim face began to quiver and finally his love for his nephew burst forth with such strength, that he seized the boy in his arms, and began to shout:

"Zbyszku! Zbyszku!"[31]

The young knight was surprised and having returned his uncle's embrace, said:

"Aj! I did not know that you loved me so much."

"I see that you are both true knights," said Powala; "and as the young man has promised me upon his knightly honor, that he will appear at the court, I will not imprison him; one can trust such people as you. No more gloomy thoughts! The German intends to stay in Tyniec a day or two; therefore I will have an opportunity to see the king first, and I will try to tell him about this affair in such a way that his anger will not be aroused. I am glad I succeeded in breaking the spear in time, – great luck, I tell you!"

But Zbyszko said:

"Even if I had to lay down my life, I would like at least to have the satisfaction of breaking his bones."

"It surprises me that you who know how to defend your own honor, do not understand that you would thus disgrace our whole nation!" impatiently answered Powala.

"I understand it very well," said Zbyszko; "but I regret my disability just the same."

Powala turned toward Macko:

"Do you know, sir, that if this lad succeeds in escaping the penalty for his offence, then you ought to put a cowl like a hawk's on his head! Otherwise he will not die a natural death."

"He will escape if you, sir, will not say anything to the king about the occurrence."

"And what shall we do with the German? We cannot tie his tongue."

"That is true! That is true!"

Talking thus, they went back toward the princess' retinue. Powala's servants followed them. From afar one could see amidst the Mazovian caps, the quivering peacock feathers of the Knight of the Cross and his bright helmet shining in the sun.

"Strange is the nature of a *Krzyzak*," said the knight of Taczew. "When a *Krzyzak* is in a tight place, he will be as forbearing as a Franciscan monk, as humble as a lamb and as sweet as honey; in fact, it would be difficult to find a better man. But let him feel power behind him; then nobody will be more arrogant and merciless. It is evident that God gave them stones for hearts. I have seen many different nations and I have often witnessed a true knight spare another who was weaker, saying to himself; 'My fame will not increase if I trample this fallen foe.' But at such a time a *Krzyzak* is implacable. Hold him by the throat, otherwise woe to you! Such a man is that envoy! He wanted not only an apology, but also your humiliation. But I am glad he failed."

"He can wait!" exclaimed Zbyszko.

"Be careful not to show him that you are troubled, because then he would rejoice."

After these words they approached the retinue and joined the princess' court. The envoy of the *Krzyzaks*, having noticed them, immediately assumed an expression of pride and disdain; but they ignored him. Zbyszko stood at Danusia's side and began to tell her that from the hill one could see Krakow; at the same time Macko was telling one of the *rybalt*s about the extraordinary strength of the Pan of Taczew, who had broken the spear in Zbyszko's hand, as though it were a dry stem.

"And why did he break it?" asked the *rybalt*.

"Because the boy in fun attacked the German."

The *rybalt*, being a nobleman, did not consider such an attack a joke; but seeing that Macko spoke about it lightly, did not take it seriously either. The German was annoyed by such conduct. He glanced at Macko and Zbyszko. Finally he realized that they did not intend to dismount and that they did not propose to pay any attention to him. Then something like steel shone in his eyes, and he immediately began to bid the princess adieu.

The Lord of Taczew could not abstain from deriding him and at the moment of departure he said to him:

"Go without fear, brave knight. The country is quiet and nobody will attack you, except some careless child."

"Although the customs of this country are strange, I was seeking your company and not your protection," answered Lichtenstein; "I expect to meet you again at the court and elsewhere."

In the last words a hidden menace rang; therefore Powala answered gravely:

"If God will permit."

Having said this, he saluted and turned away; then he shrugged his shoulders and said in an undertone, but loud enough to be heard by those who were near:

"Gaunt! I could lift you from the saddle with the point of my spear, and hold you in the air during three *pater-nosters*." [32]

Then he began to talk with the princess with whom he was very well acquainted. Anna Danuta asked him what he was doing on the highway. He told her that the king had commanded him to keep order in the environs while there were so many wealthy guests going to Krakow. Then he told her about Zbyszko's foolish conduct. But having concluded that there would be plenty of time to ask the princess to protect Zbyszko, he did not put any stress on the incident, not wishing to spoil the gaiety. The princess laughed at the boy, because he was so anxious to obtain the peacock tuft; the others, having learned about the breaking of the spear, admired the Lord of Taczew very much, especially as he did it with one hand only.

And he, being a little vain, was pleased because they praised him. Finally he began to tell about some of the exploits which made his name famous; especially those he performed in Burgundia, at the court of Philip the Courageous. There one time, during a tournament, he seized an Ardenian knight, pulled him out of the saddle and threw him in the air, notwithstanding that the knight was in full armor. For that exploit, Philip the Courageous presented him with a gold chain and the queen gave him a velvet slipper, which he wore on his helmet.

Upon hearing this, all were very much amazed, except Mikolaj of Dlugolas, who said:

"In these effeminate times, there are not such strong men as there were when I was young. If a nobleman now happens to shatter a cuirass, to bend a crossbow without the aid of the crank, or to bend a cutlass between his fingers, he immediately considers himself a very strong man. But in times of yore, girls could do such deeds."

"I don't deny that formerly there were stronger people," answered Powala; "but even now there are some strong men. God did not stint me in strength, but I do not consider myself the strongest in this kingdom. Have you ever seen Zawisza of Garbow? He can surpass me."

"I have seen him. He has shoulders broad like a rampart."

"And Dobko of Olesnica? Once at the tournament given in Torun by the Knights of the Cross, he defeated twelve knights for his own and our nation's glory."

"But our Mazur, Staszko Ciolek, was stronger, sir, than you or your Zawisza and Dobko. They say that he took a peg made from green wood in his hand and pressed the sap out of it." [33]

"I can press the sap out myself," said Zbyszko. And before anyone could ask him to prove it, he broke a branch which he pressed so strongly, that really the sap began to ooze from it.

"Aj, Jesus!" exclaimed Ofka of Jarzombkow; "don't go to the war; it would be a pity if such an one should perish before his marriage."

"It would indeed be a pity!" replied Macko, suddenly becoming sorrowful.

But Mikolaj of Dlugolas laughed as did also the princess. The others, however, praised Zbyszko's strength, and as in those times might was appreciated more than any other quality, the young girls cried to Danusia: "Be glad!" She was glad although she could not then understand what benefit she would receive from that piece of compressed wood. Zbyszko having forgotten all about the *Krzyzak* now looked so proud, that Mikolaj of Dlugolas wishing to curb his pride, said:

"There are better men than you; therefore do not be so proud of your strength. I did not see it, but my father was a witness of something more difficult which happened at the court of Charles, the Roman emperor. King Kazimierz went to pay him a visit and with him went many courtiers. Among these courtiers was Staszko Ciolek, son of *Wojewoda* [34] Andrzej, who was noted for his strength. The emperor began to boast that he had a Czech who could strangle a bear. They had an exhibition and the Czech strangled two bears in succession. Our king not wishing to be outdone, said: 'But he

cannot overcome my Ciolek.' They agreed that they should fight in three days' time. Many ladies and famous knights came, and the Czech and Ciolek grappled in the yard of the castle; but the contest did not last long; hardly had they come together before Ciolek broke the backbone of the Czech, crushed all his ribs, and left him dead to the great glory of the king.[35] They have called him since then Lomignat.[36] Once he placed without help, a bell which twelve men could not move from its place." [37] "How old was he?" asked Zbyszko.

"He was young!"

In the meantime, Powala of Taczew, while riding at the princess' right hand, bent toward her and told her the truth about the importance of Zbyszko's adventure, and asked her to speak to the king in Zbyszko's behalf. The princess being fond of Zbyszko, received this news with sadness and became very uneasy.

"The Bishop of Krakow is a friend of mine," said Powala; "I will ask him and also the queen to intercede; but the more protectors he has, the better it will be for the lad."

"If the queen will promise to say one word in his favor, not a hair will fall from his head," said Anna Danuta; "the king worships her for her piety and for her dowry, and especially now, when the shame of sterility has been taken from her. But the king's beloved sister, Princess Ziemowit lives in Krakow; you must go to her. For my part I will do anything I can; but the princess is his own sister, and I am only his first cousin."

"The king loves you also, gracious lady."

"Ej, but not as much," she answered with a certain sadness; "for me a link, for her a whole chain; for me a fox skin, for her a sable. He loves none of his relations as dearly as he loves Alexandra."

Thus talking, they approached Krakow. The highway which was crowded on the road from Tyniec, was still more crowded here. They met countrymen going with their servants to the city, sometimes armed and sometimes in summer clothing and straw hats. Some of them were on horseback; some traveled in carriages, with their wives and daughters, who wished to see the long looked for tournaments. In some places the whole road was crowded with merchants' wagons which could not pass Krakow until the toll was paid. They carried in these wagons wax, grain, salt, fish, skins, hemp and wood. Others came from the city loaded with cloth, barrels of beer and different merchandise. One could now see Krakow very well; the king's gardens, lords' and burghers' houses surrounded the city; beyond them were the walls and the towers of the churches. The nearer they came to the city the greater was the traffic and at the gates it was almost impossible to pass.

"What a city! There is no other like it in the world," said Macko.

"It is always like a fair," answered one of the *rybalt*s; "how long since you were here, sir?"

"A very long time ago. I wonder at it just as much as if I saw it now for the first time, because we are returning from a wild country."

"They say that Krakow has grown very much since the time of King Jagiello."

This was true; after the grand duke of Litwa ascended the throne, enormous Lithuanian and Russian countries were opened for commerce; because of this the city had increased in population, richness and buildings, and had become one of the most important cities in the world.

"The cities of the Knights of the Cross are very beautiful also," said the larger *rybalt*.

"If only we could capture one of them," said Macko. "Worthy booty we could get!"

But Powala of Taczew was thinking about something else; namely, of Zbyszko, who was in peril because of his stupid blind fury. The Pan of Taczew, fierce and implacable in the time of war, had in his powerful breast, however, the heart of a dove; he realized better than the others what punishment awaited the offender; therefore he pitied him.

"I ponder and ponder," said he again to the princess, "whether to tell the king of the incident or not. If the *Krzyzak* does not complain, there will be no case; but if he should complain, perhaps it would be better to tell the king everything beforehand, so that he will not become angry."

"If the *Krzyzak* has an opportunity to ruin somebody, he will do it," answered the princess; "but I will tell that young man to join our court. Perhaps the king will be more lenient to one of our courtiers."

She called Zbyszko, who having had his position explained to him, jumped from his horse, kissed her hands and became with the greatest pleasure one of her courtiers, not so much for greater safety, as because he could now remain nearer Danusia.

Powala asked Macko:

"Where will you stay?"

"In an inn."

"There is no room in any inn now."

"Then we will go to merchant Amylej, he is an acquaintance of mine, perhaps he will let us pass the night in his house."

"Accept hospitality in my house. Your nephew can stay with the princess' courtiers in the castle; but it will be better for him not to be near the king. What one does in the first paroxysm of anger, one would not do afterward. You will be more comfortable and safe with me."

Macko had become uneasy because Powala thought so much about their safety; he thanked Powala with gratitude and they entered the city. But here they both as well as Zbyszko forgot for a while about danger in the presence of the wonders they saw before them. In Lithuania and on the frontier, they had only seen single castles, and the only city of any importance which they knew was Wilno, a badly built and ruined town; but here many of the merchants' houses were more magnificent than the grand duke's palace in Lithuania. It is true that there were many wooden houses; but even these astonished them by the loftiness of their walls and roofs; also by the windows, made of glass balls, set in lead which so reflected the rays of the setting sun, that one would imagine that there was fire in the houses. In the streets near the market place, there were many highly ornamented houses of red brick, or of stone. They stood side by side like soldiers; some of them, broad; others, narrow; but all lofty with vaulted halls, very often having the sign of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ or an image of the Most Holy Virgin over the door. There were some streets, on which one could see two rows of houses, over them a stripe of blue sky, between them, a road paved with stones; and on both sides as far as one could see stores and stores. These were full of the best foreign goods, at which being accustomed to war and the capture of booty, Macko looked with a longing eye. But both were still more astonished at the sight of the public buildings; the church of Panna Maryia on the square; the *sukiennice*;<sup>[38]</sup> the city hall with its gigantic cellar, in which they were selling beer from Swidnica; other churches, depots of broadcloth, the enormous "*mercatorium*," devoted to the use of foreign merchants; then a building in which were the public scales, bath houses, cooper works, wax works, silver works, gold works, breweries, the mountains of barrels round the so-called Schrotamto, – in a word, riches which a man not familiar with the city, even though a well-to-do possessor of a *grodek*, could not even imagine.

Powala conducted Macko and Zbyszko to his house situated on Saint Anna Street, assigned a large room to them, recommended them to his shield-bearers, and then went to the castle, from which he returned for supper quite late at night.

A few friends accompanied him, and they enjoyed the plentiful repast of wine and meat. The host alone was sorrowful. When finally the guests departed, he said to Macko:

"I spoke to a canon, able in writing and in the law, who says, that an insult to an envoy is a capital offence. Therefore pray God, that the *Krzyzak* may not complain."

Hearing this, both knights, who, during the feast had exceeded the other guests in mirth, retired with sorrowful hearts. Macko could not even sleep and after a while when they were in bed, he said to his nephew:

"Zbyszku?"

"What?"

"I have considered everything and I do not think they will execute you."

"You do not think so?" asked Zbyszko, in a sleepy voice.

Having turned toward the wall, he fell sound asleep, because he was very weary.

The next day, both *wlodykas* of Bogdaniec, went with Powala to morning mass in the cathedral, for devotion and also to see the court and the guests who had arrived at the castle. In fact, on the way Powala met many acquaintances, and among them several knights famous at home and abroad. At these Zbyszko looked with admiration, promising himself that if he escaped death for the insult to Lichtenstein, he would try to rival them in gallantry and in all knightly virtues. One of these knights, Toporczyk, a relative of the castellan of Krakow, told them that Wojciech Jastrzembiec had returned from Rome, where he had been sent to Pope Bonifacius IX. with the king's invitation to the christening at Krakow. Bonifacius accepted the invitation; and although it was doubtful whether he would be able to come personally, he authorized the envoy to stand godfather for the coming child in his name; and he asked that the name Bonifacius or Bonifacia be given to the child as a proof of his particular love for the king and the queen.

They also spoke of the arrival of the Hungarian king, Sigismundus; they expected him positively, because he always came, invited or not, whenever there was an opportunity for feasts and tournaments. Of these he was very fond, because he desired to be famous the world over as a ruler, a singer and the first among knights. Powala, Zawisza of Garbow, Dobko of Olesnica, Naszan and others of the same rank, recollected with a smile that during Sigismundus' first visit, King Wladyslaw requested them privately not to attack him very fiercely, but to spare "the Hungarian guest," whose vanity, known throughout the world, used to make him cry in case of defeat. But the most interest was excited among the knights by Witold's affairs. They told marvelous tales about the magnificence of that cradle, made of sterling silver, which the Lithuanian princes and *bojars*[39] had brought as a present from Witold and his wife, Anna. Macko told about the proposed enormous expedition against the Tartars. The expedition was almost ready, and a great army had already gone eastward toward Rus'. If it were successful, it would extend the king's supremacy over almost half the world, to the unknown Asiatic countries, to the frontier of Persia and to the shores of the Aral. Macko, who formerly served under Witold and knew his plans, could tell about them so accurately and even so eloquently, that before the bells were rung for mass, a large circle of curious people had formed around him. He said that the question was simply about a crusade. "Witold himself," he said, "although they call him a grand duke, rules over Litwa by Jagiello's authority; he is only viceroy, therefore the renown will be the king's. What fame it will be for the newly baptized Lithuanians and for the might of Poland, when the united armies carry the cross to those countries where, if they mention the Saviour's name at all, it is only to blaspheme! When the Polish and Lithuanian armies restore Tochtamysh to the throne of Kapchak, he will acknowledge himself "the son" of King Wladyslaw, and he has promised to bow to the cross with the whole Zlota Orda."

The people listened to Macko with great attention; but many did not thoroughly understand what people Witold intended to help nor against whom he intended to fight; therefore some one asked:

"Tell exactly with whom is the war to be?"

"With whom? With Tymur the Lame!" replied Macko.

There was a moment of silence. It is true the eastern knights often heard the names of Golden, of Blue, of Azovian and of other Ords; but they were not familiar with the civil wars of the Tartars. Nevertheless there was not one man in Europe, who had not heard about the terrible Tymur the Lame, or Tamerlan. This name was heard with no less fear than of old was the name of Attila. He was "lord of the world" and "lord of ages;" the ruler over twenty-seven conquered states: the ruler of Moskiewskoy Russia; ruler of Siberia and of China as far as the Indies; of Bagdad, of Ispahan, of Alep, of Damascus – whose shadow was falling over the sands of Arabia, on Egypt, and on Bosphorus in the Greek empire; he was the exterminator of mankind; the terrible builder of pyramids composed

of human skulls; he was the conqueror in all battles, never conquered in any, "lord of souls and of bodies."

Tochtamysh had been placed by him on the throne of the Golden and the Blue Ords,[40] and acknowledged as "the son." But when his sovereign authority extended from Aral to Crimea, over more lands than were in the rest of Europe, "the son" wanted to be an independent ruler. For this he was deposed from his throne with "one finger" of the terrible father; he escaped to the Lithuanian governor and asked him for help. Witold decided to restore him to his throne; but to do this it was necessary to vie with the world-ruling Tymur the Lame.

For these reasons his name made a great impression on the audience, and after a short silence, one of the oldest knights, Kazko of Jaglow, said:

"A difficult business!"

"And for a trifle," said the prudent Mikolaj of Dlugolas. "What difference will it make to us, whether Tochtamysh or some Kutluk rules over the sons of Belial who dwell beyond the tenth-land?"

"Tochtamysh will turn to the Christian faith," answered Macko.

"He will or he will not! Can you trust dog-brothers, who do not confess Christ?"

"But we are ready to lay down our lives for Christ's name," answered Powala.

"And for knightly honor," added Toporczyk, the relative of the castellan; "there are some among us however who will not go. The Lord *Wojewoda*, *Spytko of Melsztyn* has a young and beloved wife, but he has already joined *Kniaz* Witold."

"No wonder," added Jasko Naszan; "no matter how hideous a sin you have on your soul, pardon and salvation are sure for those who fight in such a war."

"And fame for ages and ages," said Powala of Taczew. "Let us then have a war, and it will be better if it be a great war. Tymur has conquered the world and has twenty-seven states under him. It will be an honor for our nation if we defeat him."

"Why not?" answered Toporczyk, "even if he possesses a hundred kingdoms, let others be afraid of him – not us! You speak wisely! Let us gather together ten thousand good spearmen, and we will pass round the world."

"And what nation should conquer The Lame, if not ours?"

Thus the knights conversed. Zbyszko was sorry now because he did not go with Witold to the wild steppes. But when he was in Wilno, he wanted to see Krakow and its court and take part in the tournaments; but now he fears that he will find disgrace here at the court, while there on the steppes even at the worst, he would have found a glorious death.

But the aged Kazko of Jaglow, who was a hundred years old, and whose common sense corresponded to his age, discouraged the zealous knights.

"You are stupid!" said he. "Is it possible that none of you have heard that Christ's image spoke to the queen? If the Saviour himself condescend to such familiarity, then why will the Holy Ghost, who is the third person of the Trinity, be less kind to her. Therefore she sees future events, as if they were passing before her, and she has thus spoken:"

Here he stopped for a while, shook his head, and then said:

"I have forgotten what she prophesied, but I will soon recollect."

He began to think, and they waited silently, because the popular belief was that the queen could see the future.

"Aha!" said he, finally, "I remember now! The queen said, that if every knight went with Witold against The Lame-Man, then heathenish power would be destroyed. But all cannot go because of the dishonesty of Christian lords. We are obliged to guard the boundaries from the attacks of the Czechs and the Hungarians and also from the attacks of the Order, because we cannot trust any of them. Therefore if Witold go with only a handful of Polish warriors, then Tymur the Lame, or his *wojewodas*, coming with innumerable hosts, will defeat him."

"But we are at peace now," said Toporczyk, "and the Order will give some assistance to Witold. The Knights of the Cross cannot act otherwise, if only for the sake of appearances, and to show to the holy father that they are ready to fight the pagans. The courtiers say that Kuno von Lichtenstein came not entirely for the christening, but also to consult with the king."

"Here he is!" exclaimed the astonished Macko.

"True!" said Powala, turning his head. "So help me God, it is he! He did not stay long with the abbot."

"He is in a hurry," answered Macko, gloomily.

Kuno von Lichtenstein passed them. Macko and Zbyszko recognized him by the cross embroidered on his mantle; but he did not recognize either of them because he had seen them before with their helmets on. Passing by, he nodded to Powala of Taczew, and to Toporczyk; then with his shield-bearers, he ascended the stairs of the cathedral, in a majestic and stately manner.

At that moment the bells resounded, frightening flocks of doves and jackdaws, and announcing that mass would soon begin. Macko and Zbyszko entered the church with the others, feeling troubled about Lichtenstein's quick return. The older *wlodyka* was very uneasy, but the young one's attention was attracted by the king's court. He was surrounded by noted men, famous in war and in counsel. Many of those by whose wisdom the marriage of the grand duke of Lithuania with the young and beautiful queen of Poland, had been planned and accomplished, were now dead; but a few of them were still living, and at these, all looked with the greatest respect. The young knight could not admire enough the magnificent figure of Jasko of Tenczyn, castellan of Krakow, in which sternness was united with dignity and honesty; he admired the wise countenances of the counsellors and the powerful faces of the knights whose hair was cut evenly on their foreheads, and fell in long curls on their sides and backs. Some of them wore nets, others wore bands to keep the hair in order. The foreign guests, Hungarian and Austrian, and their attendants, were amazed at the great elegance of the costumes; the Lithuanian princes and *bojars*, notwithstanding the summer heat, were dressed for the sake of pompous display in costly furs; the Russian princes wore large stiff dresses, and in the background they looked like Byzantine pictures. With the greatest curiosity Zbyszko awaited the appearance of the king and the queen. He advanced toward the stalls behind which he could see the red velvet cushions near the altar, on which the king and the queen kneeled during mass.

He did not wait long; the king entered first, through the vestry door, and before he reached the altar one could have a good look at him. He had long, dark, disheveled hair; his face was thin and clean shaven; he had a large pointed nose and some wrinkles around his mouth. His eyes were small, dark, and shining. His face had a kind but cautious look, like that of a man who having risen by good luck to a position far beyond his expectations, is obliged to think continually whether his actions correspond to his dignity and who is afraid of malicious criticism. This also was the reason why in his face and in his movements there was a certain impatience. It was very easy to understand that his anger would be sudden and dreadful. He was that prince, who being angered at the frauds of the Knights of the Cross, shouted after their envoy: "Thou comest to me with a parchment, but I will come to thee with a spear!"

But now this natural vehemence was restrained by great and sincere piety. He set a good example, not only to the recently converted Lithuanian princes, but even to the Polish lords, pious for generations. Often the king kneeled, for the greater mortification of the flesh, on bare stones; often having raised his hands, he held them uplifted until they dropped with fatigue. He attended at least three masses every day. After mass he left the church as if just awakened from slumber, soothed and gentle. The courtiers knew that it was the best time to ask him either for pardon, or for a gift.

Jadwiga entered through the vestry door also. Seeing her enter, the knights standing near the stalls, immediately kneeled, although mass had not begun, voluntarily paying her homage as to a saint. Zbyszko did the same; nobody in this assembly doubted that he really saw a saint, whose image would some time adorn the church altars. Besides the respect due to a queen, they almost worshipped

her on account of her religious and holy life. It was reported that the queen could perform miracles. They said that she could cure the sick by touching them with her hand; that people who could not move their legs nor their arms, were able to do it, after they put on a dress which the queen had worn. Trustworthy witnesses affirmed that they had heard with their own ears, Christ speak to her from the altar. Foreign monarchs worshipped her on their knees and even the Order of the Knights of the Cross respected her and feared to offend her. Pope Bonifacius IX. called her the pious and chosen daughter of the church. The world looked at her deeds and remembered that this child of the Andegavian[41] house and Polish Piasts[42], this daughter of the powerful Louis, a pupil of the most fastidious of courts, and also one of the most beautiful women on earth, renounced happiness, renounced her first love and being a queen married a "wild" prince of Lithuania, in order to bring to the cross, by his help, the last pagan nation in Europe. That which could not be accomplished by the forces of all the Germans, by a sea of poured out blood, was done with one word from her. Never did the glory of an apostle shine over a younger and more charming forehead; never was the apostleship united with equal self-denial; never was the beauty of a woman lighted with such angelic kindness and such quiet sadness.

Therefore minstrels sang about her in all the European courts; knights from the remotest countries came to Krakow to see this "Queen of Poland;" her own people loved her, as the pupil of the eye and their power and glory had increased by her marriage with Jagiello. Only one great sorrow hung over her and the nation; for long years this child of God had had no issue.

But now this sorrow had passed away and the joyful news of God's blessing on the queen sped like lightning from the Baltic to the Black Sea, also to Karpaty[43] and filled with joy all peoples of this powerful kingdom. In all foreign courts, except in the capital of the Knights of the Cross, the news was received with pleasure. In Rome "Te Deum" was sung. In the provinces of Poland the belief was firmly established, that anything the "Saint lady" asked of God, would be granted.

Therefore there came to her people to beseech her, that she ask health for them; there came envoys from the provinces and from other countries, to ask that she pray according to their need, either for rain, or for fair weather for harvesting; for lucky moving time; for abundant fishing in the lakes or for game in the forests.

Those knights, living in castles and *grodeks* on the frontier, who according to the custom learned from the Germans, had become robbers or waged war among themselves, at the command of the queen, put their swords in their scabbards, released their prisoners without ransom, restored stolen herds and clasped hands in friendship. All kinds of misery, all kinds of poverty crowded the gates of her castle in Krakow. Her pure spirit penetrated human hearts, softened the hard lot of the serfs, the great pride of the lords, the unjust severity of the judges, and hovered like a dove of happiness, like an angel of justice and peace, over the whole country.

No wonder then that all were awaiting with anxious hearts for the day of blessing.

The knights looked closely at the figure of the queen, to see if they could ascertain how long they would be obliged to wait for the future heir to the throne. The *ksiondz*[44] bishop of Krakow, Wysz, who was also the ablest physician in the country, and famous even abroad, had not announced when the delivery would occur. They were making some preparation; but it was the custom at that time to begin all festivals as early as possible, and to prolong them for weeks. In fact the figure of the lady, although a little rounded, had retained until now its former grandeur. She was dressed with excessive simplicity. Formerly, having been brought up at a brilliant court, and being more beautiful than any of the contemporary princesses, she was fond of costly fabrics, of chains, pearls, gold bracelets and rings; but now and even for several years past, she not only wore the dress of a nun, but she even covered her face, fearing that the thoughts of her beauty might arouse in her worldly vanity. In vain Jagiello, having learned of her condition, in a rapture of joy ordered her sleeping apartment to be decorated with brocade and jewels. Having renounced all luxury, and remembering that the time of

confinement is often the time of death, she decided that not among jewels, but in quiet humility she ought to receive the blessing which God had promised to send her.

Meanwhile the gold and jewels went to establish a college and to send the newly converted Lithuanian youths to foreign universities.

The queen agreed only to change her monastical dress, and from the time that the hope of maternity was changed to positive certainty, she did not veil her face, thinking that the dress of a penitent was no longer proper.

Consequently everybody was now looking with love at that beautiful face, to which neither gold, nor precious stones could add any charm. The queen walked slowly from the vestry door toward the altar, with uplifted eyes, holding in one hand a book, in the other a rosary. Zbyszko saw the lily-like face, the blue eyes, and the angelic features full of peace, kindness and mercy, and his heart began to throb with emotion. He knew that according to God's command he ought to love the king and the queen, and he did in his way; but now his heart overflowed with a great love, which did not come by command, but burst forth like a flame; his heart was also filled with the greatest worship, humility and desire for sacrifice. The young *wlodyka* Zbyszko was impetuous; therefore a desire immediately seized him, to show in some way that love and the faithfulness of a knight; to accomplish some deed for her; to rush somewhere, to conquer some one and to risk his own life for it all. "I had better go with *Kniaz* Witold," he said to himself, "because how can I serve the holy lady, if there is no war here." He did not stop to think that one can serve in other ways as well as with sword or spear or axe; he was ready to attack alone the whole power of Tymur the Lamé. He wanted to jump on his charger immediately after mass and begin something. What? He did not know himself. He only knew, that he could not hold anything, that his hands were burning and his whole soul was on fire.

He forgot all about the danger which threatened him. He even forgot about Danusia, and when he remembered her, having heard the children singing in the church, he felt that this love was something different. He had promised Danusia fidelity; he had promised her three Germans and he would keep his promise. But the queen is above all women. While he was thinking how many people he would like to kill for the queen, he perceived regiments of armors, helmets, ostrich feathers, peacocks' crests, and he felt that even that would be small in proportion to his desire.

He looked at her constantly, pondering with overflowing heart, how he could honor her by prayer, because he thought that one could not make an ordinary prayer for a queen. He could say: *Pater noster, qui es in coelis, sanctificetur nomen Tuum*, because a certain Franciscan monk taught him this in Wilno; but it may be that the Franciscan himself did not know more; it may be that Zbyszko had forgotten; but it is certain that he could not recite the whole "Our Father." But now he began to repeat these few words which in his soul had the following meaning: "Give our beloved lady good health, long life and great happiness; care for her more than for anyone else."

As this was repeated by a man over whose head punishment was suspended, therefore there was no more sincere prayer in the whole church.

## CHAPTER V

After mass Zbyszko thought that if he could only fall upon his knees before the queen and kiss her feet, then he did not care what happened afterward. But after the first mass, the queen went to her apartments. Usually she did not take any nourishment until noontime, and was not present at the merry breakfast, during which jugglers and fools appeared for the amusement of the king. The old *wlodyka* of Dlugolas came and summoned Zbyszko to the princess.

"You will serve Danusia and me at the table as my courtier," said the princess. "It may happen that you will please the king by some facetious word or deed, and the Krzyzak if he recognize you, will not complain to the king, seeing that you serve me at the king's table."

Zbyszko kissed the princess' hand. Then he turned to Danusia; and although he was more accustomed to battles than to the manners of the court, still he evidently knew what was befitting a knight, when he sees the lady of his thoughts in the morning; he retreated, and assuming an expression of surprise, and making the sign of the cross, exclaimed:

"In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost!"

Danusia, looking at him with her blue eyes, asked:

"Why do you make the sign of the cross, Zbyszko, after mass is ended?"

"Because your beauty increased so much, during last night, that I am astonished!"

Mikolaj of Dlugolas, who did not like the new, foreign customs of chivalry, shrugged his shoulders and said:

"Don't lose time talking to her about her beauty! She is only a bush hardly grown up from the soil."

At this Zbyszko looked at him with rancor.

"You must be careful about calling her a 'bush,'" said he, turning pale with anger; "if you were younger, I would challenge you immediately and would fight until either you or I were dead!"

"Keep quiet, you beardless boy! I can manage you even to-day!"

"Be quiet!" said the princess. "Instead of thinking about your own danger, you are seeking a quarrel! I would prefer to find a more steady knight for Danusia. If you wish to foam, go where you please; but we do not need you here."

Zbyszko felt abashed at the princess' words and began to apologize. But he thought to himself that if Pan Mikolaj of Dlugolas had a grown-up son, then sometime he would challenge the son and would not forgive Mikolaj for calling her "bush." Now he determined to be quiet while in the king's castle and not to provoke anybody, only in case of absolute necessity.

The blowing of horns announced that breakfast was ready; therefore the Princess Anna taking Danusia by the hand, went to the king's apartments, where the lay-dignitaries and the knights, stood awaiting her arrival. Princess Ziemowita entered first, because being the king's sister, she occupied a higher seat at the table. Soon the hall was filled with guests, dignitaries and knights. The king was seated at the upper end of the table, having near him Wojciech Jastrzemiec, bishop of Krakow, the bishop, although inferior in rank to the other priests wearing mitres, was seated at the right hand of the king because he was the pope's envoy. The two princesses took the next places. Near Anna Danuta, the former archbishop of Gniezno, Jan, was comfortably seated in a large chair. He was a descendant of the Piasts of Szlonsk and the son of Bolko, Prince of Opole. Zbyszko had heard of him at the court of Witold; and now while standing behind the princess and Danusia, he recognized the archbishop by his abundant hair which being curled, made his head look like a *kropidlo*.<sup>[45]</sup> At the courts of the Polish princes, they called him "Kropidlo," for this reason; and the Knights of the Cross gave him the name of "Grapidla." He was noted for his gaiety and giddy manners. Having received the nomination for the archbishopric of Gniezno, against the king's wish, he took possession of it by military force; for this act he was deprived of his rank. He then joined the Knights of the Cross who

gave him the poor bishopric of Kamieniec in Pomorze. Then he concluded that it was better to be friendly with the mighty king; he craved his pardon, returned to the country and was now waiting for a vacancy to occur, hoping that the good hearted lord would let him fill it. He was not mistaken as the future proved. In the meantime he was trying to win the king's heart by merry frolics. But he still liked the Knights of the Cross. Even now, at the court of Jagiello where he was not greatly welcomed by the dignitaries and knights, he sought Lichtenstein's company and gladly sat beside him at the table.

Zbyszko, standing behind the princess' chair, was so near to the Krzyzak, Lichtenstein, that he could have touched him with his hand. In fact, his fingers began to twitch, but he overcame his impetuosity and did not permit himself any evil thoughts. But he could not refrain from looking eagerly at Lichtenstein's head and shoulders, trying to decide whether he would have a hard fight with him, if they met either during the war, or in single combat. He concluded that it would not be difficult to conquer the German. The Krzyzak's shoulder bones appeared quite large under his dress of grey broadcloth; but he was only a weakling compared with Powala or with Paszko Zlodziej of Biskupice, or with both of the most famous Sulimczyks, or with Krzon of Kozielowy or with many of the other knights, sitting at the king's table.

At these knights Zbyszko looked with admiration and envy; but his attention was also attracted by the actions of the king, who at this moment gathered his hair with his fingers and pushed it behind his ears, as if he was impatient because breakfast was not served. His eyes rested for a moment on Zbyszko, and at that the young knight felt afraid, fearing that perhaps he would be obliged to face the angry king. This was the first time he had thought seriously about the consequences of his rash action. Until now it had seemed to him to be something remote, therefore not worthy of sorrow.

The German did not know that that youth who had attacked him so boldly on the highway, was so near. The breakfast began. They brought in caudle, seasoned so strongly with eggs, cinnamon, cloves, ginger and saffron, that the fragrance filled the whole room. In the meanwhile the fool Ciaruszek, sitting on a chair in the doorway, began to imitate the singing of a nightingale, of which the king was very fond. Then another jester went around the table, stopped behind the guests and imitated the buzzing of a bee so well, that some of them began to defend their heads. Seeing this, the others burst with laughter. Zbyszko had served the princess and Danusia diligently; but when Lichtenstein began to clap his baldhead, he again forgot about his danger and began to laugh. The young Lithuanian *kniaz*, Jamut, who was standing beside him, also laughed at this very heartily. The Krzyzak having finally noticed his mistake, put his hand in his pocket, and turning to the bishop, Kropidlo, said a few words to him in German; the bishop immediately repeated them in Polish.

"The noble lord says to you," said he, turning toward the fool, "that you will receive two *skojce*; but do not buzz too near, because the bee is driven away, but the drones are killed."

The fool took the two *skojce* given to him by the Krzyzak, and taking advantage of the license granted at all courts to the fools, answered:

"There is plenty of honey in the province of Dobrzyn;[46] that is why it is beset with the drones. Drive them, King Wladyslaw!"

"Here is a penny from me, because you have said a clever thing," said Kropidlo, "but remember that if the rope break, the beehive keeper break his neck.[47] Those drones from Malborg, by whom Dobrzyn is beset, have stings, and it is dangerous to climb to the beehives."

"Owa!" exclaimed Zyndram of Maszkow, the sword bearer of Krakow, "one can smoke them out!"

"With what?"

"With powder."

"Or cut the beehive with an axe," added the gigantic Paszko Zlodziej of Biskupice.

Zbyszko's heart was ready to leap with joy, because he thought that such words betokened war. Kuno von Lichtenstein understood what was said, because during his long sojourn in Torun and

Chelmno, he learned the Polish language; but he would not use it on account of pride. But now, being irritated by the words of Zyndram of Maszkow, he looked at him sharply with his grey eyes and said:

"We shall see."

"Our fathers saw at Plowce[48] and at Wilno," answered Zyndram.

"*Pax vobiscum!*" exclaimed Kropidlo. "*Pax, pax!* If only the *ksiondz*[49] Mikolaj of Kurow, will give up his Kujawian bishopric, and the gracious king appoint me in his place, I will preach you such a beautiful sermon about the love between Christian nations, that you will sincerely repent. Hatred is nothing but *ignis* and *ignis infernalis* at that; such a dreadful fire that one cannot extinguish it with water, but is obliged to pour wine on it. Give us some wine! We will go on *ops*,[50] as the late Bishop Zawisza of Kurozwenki used to say!"

"And from *ops* to hell, the devil says," added the fool Ciaruszek.

"Let him take you!"

"It would be more amusing for him to take you. They have not yet seen the devil with Kropidlo, but I think we shall all have that pleasure."

"I will sprinkle you first. Give us some wine and may love blossom among the Christians!"

"Among true Christians!" added Kuno von Lichtenstein, emphatically.

"What?" exclaimed the Krakowian bishop Wysz, raising his head; "are you not in an old Christian kingdom? Are not our churches older than yours in Malborg?"[51]

"I don't know," answered the Krzyzak. The king was especially sensitive where any question about Christianity arose. It seemed to him that the Krzyzak wished to make an allusion to him; therefore his cheeks flamed immediately and his eyes began to shine.

"What!" said he, in a deep voice, "am I not a Christian king?"

"The kingdom calls itself a Christian one," coolly answered the Krzyzak; "but its customs are pagan."

At this many angry knights arose; Marcin of Wrocimowice, whose coat of arms was Polkoza, Florian of Korytnica, Bartosz of Wodzinek, Domarat of Kobylany, Zyndram of Maszkow, Powala of Taczew, Paszko Zlodziej of Biskupice, Jaxa of Targowisko, Krzon of Kozięglowy, Zygmunt of Bobowa and Staszko of Charbimowice, powerful and famous knights, victorious in many battles and in many tournaments. Alternately blushing and turning pale from anger, gnashing their teeth, they began to shout:

"Woe to us! He is a guest and we cannot challenge him!"

Zawisza Czarny, Sulimczyk, the most famous among the famous, "the model of knighthood," turned to Lichtenstein with a frown on his forehead and said:

"I do not recognize you, Kuno. How can you, a knight, insult a mighty nation, when you know that, being an envoy, you cannot be punished for it."

But Kuno quietly sustained the threatening look, and answered slowly and precisely:

"Our Order, before it came to Prussia, fought in Palestine; even there the Saracens respected the envoys. But you do not respect them; that is the reason I called your customs pagan."

At these words the uproar increased. Round the table again were heard shouts: "Woe! Woe!"

But they subsided when the king, who was furious, clasped his hands in the Lithuanian fashion. Then the old Jasko Topor of Tenczyn, castellan of Krakow, venerable, grave and dreaded on account of the importance of his office, arose and said:

"Noble Knight of Lichtenstein, if you, an envoy, have been insulted, speak, and severe punishment will be given quickly."

"It would not have happened to me in any other Christian country," answered Kuno. "Yesterday on the road to Tynieć I was attacked by one of your knights, and although he could very easily recognize by the cross on my mantle who I was, he attempted my life."

Zbyszko, having heard these words, became very pale and involuntarily glanced at the king, whose anger was terrible. Jasko of Tenczyn was surprised, and said:

"Can it be possible?"

"Ask the Pan of Taczew, who was a witness of the incident."

"All eyes turned toward Powala, who stood for a while gloomy, and with lowered eyelids; then he said:

"Yes, it is so!"

Hearing this the knights began to shout: "Shame! Shame! The earth will devour such a man!" Because of this disgrace some of them began to strike their chests with their hands, and others to rap the silver dishes, not knowing what to do.

"Why did you not kill him?" shouted the king.

"Because his head belongs to the court," answered Powala.

"Have you put him in prison?" asked the castellan, Topor of Tenczyn.

"No. He is a *wlodyka*, who swore on his knightly honor, that he would appear."

"But he will not appear!" ironically exclaimed Kuno, raising his head.

At that moment a young voice resounded behind the Krzyzak:

"I did it; I, Zbyszko of Bogdaniec!"

After these words the knights rushed toward the unhappy Zbyszko; but they were stopped by a threatening nod from the king who began to shout in an angry voice, similar to the rattling of a carriage rolling over the stones:

"Cut his head off! Cut his head off! Let the Krzyzak send it to Malborg to the grand master!"

Then he cried to the young Lithuanian prince standing near.

"Hold him, Jamont!"

The frightened Jamont put his trembling hands on Zbyszko's shoulders.

But the white-bearded castellan of Krakow, Topor of Tenczyn, raised his hand as a sign that he wished to speak; when everybody was quiet, he said:

"Gracious king! Let this *comthur* be convinced that not only your impetuous anger, but our laws will punish with death any who insult an envoy. Otherwise he will think that there are no Christian laws in this country. To-morrow I will judge the offender."

The last words he said quietly and as though no one could change his decision. Then he said to Jamont:

"Shut him in the tower. As for you, Pan of Taczew, you will be a witness."

"I will tell about the offence of this lad," answered Powala, looking at Lichtenstein.

"He is right!" immediately said some knights. "He is only a lad! Why should the shame be put on us all!"

There was a moment of silence, and angry looks were cast at the Krzyzak. In the meanwhile Jamont conducted Zbyszko to the court-yard of the castle and intrusted him to the archers. In his young heart he pitied the prisoner, and this pity was increased by his natural hatred of the Germans. But he was a Lithuanian, accustomed to fulfill blindly the orders of the grand duke; being himself afraid of the king's wrath, he began to whisper to the young knight, with kindly persuasion:

"Do you know, what I would do if in your place? Hang myself! It will be the best! The *korol*[52] is angry; they will cut off your head. Why should you not make him joyful? Hang yourself, *druh*. [53] Such is the custom in my country."

Zbyszko, half dazed with shame and fear, at first did not seem to understand the words of the *kniazik*:[54] but finally he understood them and then he was amazed:

"What do you say?"

"Hang yourself! Why should they judge you. You will only afford pleasure for the king!" repeated Jamont.

"Hang your own self!" exclaimed the young *wlodyka*. "They have baptized you but your heathen skin remains on you. Do you not know that it is a sin for a Christian to kill himself?"

The *kniaz* shrugged his shoulders:

"It will not be according to your will. They will cut off your head just the same."

These words angered Zbyszko, and he wondered if it would be proper to challenge the *bojarzynek*[55] for a fight either on horseback or on foot, with swords or with axes; but he stifled this desire. He dropped his head sadly and surrounded by the archers, went silently to the tower.

In the meanwhile everybody's attention in the dining hall was turned to Danusia, who became pale with fright. She stood motionless like a wax figure in a church. But when she heard that they were going to execute Zbyszko, then she was seized with great fear; her mouth quivered and at once she began to cry so loudly and so pitifully, that all faces turned toward her and the king himself asked her:

"What is the matter with thee?"

"Gracious king!" said the Princess Anna, "she is the daughter of Jurand of Spychow and this unhappy knight made a vow to her. He promised her to tear three peacock tufts from the helmets of the Germans, and having noticed such a tuft on the helmet of this *comthur*, he thought that God himself had sent the Krzyzak. He did not attack him, lord, through malice, but through stupidity; therefore be merciful and do not punish him, we beseech you on our knees!"

Having said this she arose, seized Danusia by the hand, and rushed with her toward the king, who seeing this began to retire. But both kneeled before him and Danusia began to cry;

"Forgive Zbyszko, king, forgive Zbyszko!"

Because she was afraid, she hid her fair head between the folds of the king's dress, kissed his knees and trembled like a leaf. Anna Ziemowitowa kneeled on the other side and having clasped her hands, looked at the king on whose face there was visible great perplexity. He retired toward the chair, but did not push Danusia back, only waved his hands.

"Do not trouble me!" he cried. "The youth is guilty; he has brought disgrace on the country! They must execute him!"

But the little hands clung closer and closer to his knees and the child cried more and more pitifully:

"Forgive Zbyszko, king, forgive Zbyszko!"

Now the voices of some knights were heard to exclaim:

"Jurand of Spychow is a famous knight, and the cause of awe to the Germans."

"And that youth fought bravely at Wilno!" added Powala.

But the king excused himself further, although he pitied Danusia.

"He is not guilty toward me and it is not I who can forgive him. Let the envoy of the Order pardon him, then I will pardon him also; but if the envoy will not, then he must die."

"Forgive him, sir!" exclaimed both of the princesses.

"Forgive, forgive!" repeated the voices of the knights.

Kuno closed his eyes and sat with uplifted forehead, as if he was delighted to see both princesses and such famous knights entreating him. Then his appearance changed; he dropped his head, crossed his hands on his breast and from a proud man became a humble one, and said with a soft, mild voice:

"Christ, our Saviour, forgave his enemies and even the malefactor on the cross."

"He is a true knight!" said Bishop Wysz.

"He is, he is!"

"How can I refuse to forgive," continued Kuno, "being not only a Christian, but also a monk? Therefore I forgive him with all my heart, as Christ's servant and friar!"

"Honor to him!" shouted Powala of Taczew.

"Honor!" repeated the others.

"But," said the Krzyzak, "I am here among you as an envoy and I carry in me the majesty of the whole Order which is Christ's Order. Whosoever offends me, therefore, offends the Order; and whosoever offends the Order, offends Christ himself; and such an offence, I, in the presence of God and the people, cannot forgive; and if your law does not punish it, let all Christian lords know."

After these words, there was a profound silence. Then after a while there could be heard here and there the gnashing of teeth, the heavy breathing of suppressed wrath and Danusia's sobbings.

By evening all hearts were in sympathy with Zbyszko. The same knights who in the morning were ready to cut him into pieces, were now considering how they could help him. The princesses determined to see the queen, and beseech her to prevail upon Lichtenstein to withdraw his complaint; or if necessary to write to the grand master of the Order, and ask him to command Kuno to give up the case. This plan seemed to be the best because Jadwiga was regarded with such unusual respect that if the grand master refused her request, it would make the pope angry and also all Christian lords. It was not likely that he would refuse because Konrad von Jungingen was a peaceable man. Unfortunately Bishop Wysz of Krakow, who was also the queen's physician, forbade them to mention even a word about this affair to the queen. "She never likes to hear about death sentences," he said, "and she takes even the question of a simple robber's death too seriously; she will worry much more if she hear about this young man who hopes to obtain mercy from her. But such anxiety will make her seriously ill, and her health is worth more to the whole kingdom than ten knightly heads." He finally said that if anyone should dare, notwithstanding what he had said, to disturb the queen, on that one he would cause the king's anger to rest and then he threatened such an one with excommunication.

Both princesses were frightened at such menace and determined to be silent before the queen; but instead to beseech the king until he showed some mercy. The whole court and all the knights sympathized with Zbyszko. Powala of Taczew declared that he would tell the whole truth; but that he would also speak in favor of the young man, because the whole affair was only an instance of childish impetuosity. But notwithstanding all this, everybody could see, and the castellan, Jasko of Tenczyn made it known, that if the Krzyzak was unrelenting, then the severe law must be fulfilled.

Therefore the knights were still more indignant against Lichtenstein and they all thought and even said frankly: "He is an envoy and cannot be called to the lists; but when he returns to Malborg, God will not permit that he die a natural death." They were not talking in vain, because a knight who wore the girdle was not permitted to say even one word without meaning it, and the knight who vowed anything, was obliged to accomplish his vow or perish. Powala was the most implacably angry because he had a beloved daughter of Danusia's age in Taczew, and Danusia's tears made his heart tender.

Consequently, that same day, he went to see Zbyszko, in his underground cell, commanded him to have hope, and told him about the princesses' prayers and about Danusia's tears. Zbyszko having learned that the girl threw herself at the king's feet for his sake, was moved to tears, and wishing to express his gratitude, said, wiping his tears with his hand:

"Hej! may God bless her, and permit me as soon as possible to engage in a combat, either on horseback or on foot, for her sake! I did not promise Germans enough to her! To such a lady, I ought to vow as many as she has years. If the Lord Jesus will only release me from this tower, I will not be niggardly with her!" He raised his eyes, full of gratitude.

"First promise something to some church," advised the *Pan* of Taczew; "if your promise is pleasing, you will surely soon be free. Now listen; your uncle went to see Lichtenstein, and I will go see him also. It will be no shame for you to ask his pardon, because you are guilty; and then you do not ask for pardon of Lichtenstein, but an envoy. Are you ready?"

"As soon as such a knight as your grace tells me it is proper, I will do it. But if he require me to ask him for pardon in the same way he asked us to do it, on the road from Tyniec, then let them cut off my head. My uncle will remain and he will avenge me when the envoy's mission is ended."

"We shall hear first what he says to Macko," answered Powala.

And Macko really went to see the German; but he returned as gloomy as the night and went directly to the king, to whom he was presented by the castellan, himself. The king received Macko kindly because he had been appeased; when Macko kneeled, he immediately told him to arise, asking what he wished.

"Gracious lord," said Macko, "there was an offence, there must be a punishment; otherwise, there would be no law in the world. But I am also guilty because I did not try to restrain the natural impetuosity of that youth; I even praised him for it. It is my fault, gracious king, because I often told him: 'First cut, and then look to see whom you have hurt.' That was right in war, but wrong at the court! But he is a man, pure as gold, the last of our family!"

"He has brought shame upon me and upon my kingdom," said the king; "shall I be gracious to him for that?"

Macko was silent, because when he thought about Zbyszko, grief overpowered him; after a long silence, he began to talk in a broken voice:

"I did not know that I loved him so well; I only know it now when misfortune has come. I am old and he is last of the family. If he perish – we perish! Merciful king and lord, have pity on our family!"

Here Macko kneeled again and having stretched out his arms wasted by war, he spoke with tears:

"We defended Wilno; God gave us honest booty; to whom shall I leave it? If the Krzyzak requires punishment, let punishment come; but permit me to suffer it. What do I care for life without Zbyszko! He is young; let him redeem the land and beget children, as God ordered man to do. The Krzyzak will not ask whose head was cut off, if there is one cut. There will be no shame on the family. It is difficult for a man to die; but it is better that one man perish than that a family should be destroyed."

Speaking thus he clasped the king's legs; the king began to wink his eyes, which was a sign of emotion with him; finally he said:

"It can not be! I cannot condemn to death a belted knight! It cannot be!  
It cannot be!"

"And there would be no justice in it," added the castellan. "The law will crush the guilty one; but it is not a monster, which does not look to see whose blood is being shed. And you must consider what shame would fall on your family, if your nephew agreed to your proposal. It would be considered a disgrace, not only to him, but to his children also."

To this Macko replied:

"He would not agree. But if it were done without his knowledge, he would avenge me, even as I also will avenge him."

"Ha!" said Tenczynski, "persuade the Krzyzak to withdraw the complaint."

"I have asked him."

"And what?" asked the king, stretching his neck; "what did he say?"

"He answered me thus: 'You ought to have asked me for pardon on the road to Tyniec; you would not then; now I will not.'"

"And why didn't you do it?"

"Because he required us to dismount and apologize on foot."

The king having put his hair behind his ears, commenced to say something when a courtier entered to announce that the Knight of Lichtenstein was asking for an audience.

Having heard this, Jagiello looked at Jasko of Tenczyn, then at Macko. He ordered them to remain, perhaps with the hope that he would be able to take advantage of this opportunity and using his kingly authority, bring the affair to an end.

Meanwhile the Krzyzak entered, bowed to the king, and said:

"Gracious lord! Here is the written complaint about the insult which I suffered in your kingdom."

"Complain to him," answered the king, pointing to Jasko of Tenczyn.

The Krzyzak, looking directly into the king's face, said:

"I know neither your laws nor your courts; I only know, that an envoy of the Order can complain only to the king."

Jagiello's small eyes flashed with impatience; he stretched out his hand however, and accepted the complaint which he handed to Tenczynski.

The castellan unfolded it and began to read; but the further he read, the more sorrowful and sad his face became.

"Sir," said he, finally, "you are seeking the life of that lad, as though he were dangerous to the whole Order. Is it possible that the Knights of the Cross are afraid even of the children?"

"The Knights of the Cross are not afraid of anyone," answered the *comthur*, proudly.

And the old castellan added:

"And especially of God."

The next day Powala of Taczew testified to everything he could before the court of the castellan, that would lessen the enormity of Zbyszko's offence. But in vain did he attribute the deed to childishness and lack of experience; in vain he said that even some one older, if he had made the same vow, prayed for its fulfillment and then had suddenly perceived in front of him such a crest, would also have believed that it was God's providence. But one thing, the worthy knight could not deny; had it not been for him, Zbyszko's spear would have pierced the Krzyzak's chest. Kuno had brought to the court the armor which he wore that day; it appeared that it was so thin that Zbyszko with his great strength, would have pierced it and killed the envoy, if Powala of Taczew had not prevented him. Then they asked Zbyszko if he intended to kill the Krzyzak, and he could not deny it. "I warned him from afar," said he, "to point his lance, and had he shouted in reply that he was an envoy, I would not have attacked him."

These words pleased the knights who, on account of their sympathy for the lad, were present in great numbers, and immediately numerous voices were heard to say: "True! Why did he not reply!" But the castellan's face remained gloomy and severe. Having ordered those present to be silent, he meditated for a while, then looked sharply at Zbyszko, and asked:

"Can you swear by the Passion of our Lord that you saw neither the mantle nor the cross?"

"No!" answered Zbyszko. "Had I not seen the cross, I would have thought he was one of our knights, and I would not have attacked one of ours."

"And how was it possible to find any Krzyzak near Krakow, except an envoy, or some one from his retinue?"

To this Zbyszko did not reply, because there was nothing to be said. To everybody it was clear, that if the *Pan* of Taczanow had not interposed, at the present moment there would lie before them not the armor of the envoy, but the envoy himself, with pierced breast – an eternal disgrace to the Polish nation; – therefore even those who sympathized with Zbyszko, with their whole souls, understood that he could not expect a mild sentence.

In fact, after a while the castellan said:

"As you did not stop to think whom you were attacking, and you did it without anger, therefore our Saviour will forgive you; but you had better commit yourself to the care of the Most Holy Lady, because the law cannot condone your offence."

Having heard this, Zbyszko, although he expected such words, became somewhat pale; but he soon shook his long hair, made the sign of the cross, and said:

"God's will! I cannot help it!"

Then he turned to Macko and looked expressively at Lichtenstein, as if to recommend him to Macko's memory; his uncle nodded in return that he understood and would remember. Lichtenstein also understood the look and the nod, and although he was as courageous as implacable, a cold shiver ran through him – so dreadful and ill-omened was the face of the old warrior. The Krzyzak knew that between him and that knight it would be a question of life or death. That even if he wanted to avoid the combat, he could not do it; that when his mission was ended, they must meet, even at Malborg.[56]

Meanwhile the castellan went to the adjoining room to dictate the sentence to a secretary. Some of the knights during the interruption came near the Krzyzak, saying:

"May they give you a more merciful sentence in the great day of judgment!"

But Lichtenstein cared only for the opinion of Zawisza, because he was noted all over the world for his knightly deeds, his knowledge of the laws of chivalry and his great exactness in keeping them. In the most entangled affairs in which there was any question about knightly honor, they used to go to him even from distant lands. Nobody contradicted his decisions, not only because there was no chance of victory in a contest with him, but because they considered him "the mirror of honor." One word of blame or praise from his mouth was quickly known by the knighthood of Poland, Hungary, Bohemia (Czech) and Germany; and he could decide between the good and evil actions of a knight.

Therefore Lichtenstein approached him as if he would like to justify his deadly grudge, and said:

"The grand master himself, with the chapter, could show him clemency; but I cannot."

"Your grand master has nothing to do with our laws; our king can show clemency to our people, not he," answered Zawisza.

"I as the envoy was obliged to insist upon punishment."

"Lichtenstein, you were first a knight, afterward an envoy!"

"Do you think that I acted against honor?"

"You know our books of chivalry, and you know that they order us to imitate two animals, the lamb and the lion. Which of the two have you, imitated in this case?"

"You are not my judge!"

"You asked me if you had committed an offence, and I answered as I thought."

"You give me a hard answer, which I cannot swallow."

"You will be choked by your own malice, not by mine."

"But Christ will put to my account, the fact that I cared more about the dignity of the Order, than about your praise."

"He will judge all of us."

Further conversation was interrupted by the reappearance of the castellan and the secretary. They knew that the sentence would be a severe one, and everyone waited silently. The castellan sat at the table, and, having taken a crucifix in his hand, ordered Zbyszko to kneel.

The secretary began to read the sentence in Latin. It was a sentence of death. When the reading was over, Zbyszko struck himself several times on the chest, repeating; "God be merciful to me, a sinner!"

Then he arose and threw himself in Macko's arms, who began to kiss his head and eyes.

In the evening of the same day, a herald announced at the four corners of the market place with the sound of trumpets, to the knights, guests and burghers assembled, that the noble Zbyszko of Bogdaniec was sentenced by the castellan's court to be decapitated by the sword.

But Macko obtained a delay of the execution; this was readily granted, because in those days they used to allow prisoners plenty of time to dispose of their property, as well as to be reconciled to God. Lichtenstein himself did not wish to insist upon an early execution of the sentence, because he understood, that as long as he obtained satisfaction for the offended majesty of the Order, it would be bad policy to estrange the powerful monarch, to whom he was sent not only to take part in the solemnity of the christening, but also to attend to the negotiations about the province of Dobrzyn. But the chief reason for the delay was the queen's health. Bishop Wysz did not wish even to hear about the execution before her delivery, rightly thinking, that it would be difficult to conceal such an affair from the lady. She would feel such sorrow and distress that it would be very injurious to her health. For these reasons, they granted Zbyszko several weeks, and perhaps more, of life, to make his final arrangements and to bid his friends farewell.

Macko visited him every day and tried to console him. They spoke sorrowfully about Zbyszko's inevitable death, and still more sorrowfully about the fact that the family would become extinct.

"It cannot be otherwise, unless you marry," Zbyszko said once.

"I would prefer to find some distant relative," answered the sorrowful Macko. "How can I think about women, when they are going to behead you. And even if I am obliged to marry, I will not do it, until I send a knightly challenge to Lichtenstein, and seek to avenge your death. Do not fear!"

"God will reward you. I have at least that joy! But I know that you will not forgive him. How will you avenge me?"

"When his duty as an envoy has ended, there may be a war! If there be war, I will send him a challenge for single combat before the battle."

"On the leveled ground?"

"On the leveled ground, on horseback or on foot, but only for death, not for captivity. If there be peace, then I will go to Malborg and will strike the door of the castle gates with my spear, and will order the trumpeter to proclaim that I challenge Kuno to fight until death. He cannot avoid the contest!"

"Surely he will not refuse. And you will defeat him."

"Defeat? I could not defeat Zawisza, Paszko, nor Powala; but without boasting, I can take care of two like him. That scoundrel Krzyzak shall see! That Fryzjan knight, was he not stronger? And how I cut him through the helmet, until the axe stopped! Did I not?"

Zbyszko breathed with relief and said:

"I will perish with some consolation."

They both began to sigh, and the old nobleman spoke with emotion:

"You mustn't break down with sorrow. Your bones will not search for one another at the day of judgment. I have ordered an honest coffin of oak planks for you. Even the canons of the church of Panna Marya could not have any better. You will not perish like a peasant. I will not permit them to decapitate you on the same cloth on which they behead burghers. I have made an agreement with Amylej, that he furnish a new cloth, so handsome that it would be good enough to cover king's fur. I will not be miserly with prayers, either; don't be afraid!"

Zbyszko's heart rejoiced, and bending toward his uncle's hand, he repeated:

"God will reward you!"

Sometimes, however, notwithstanding all this consolation he was seized with a feeling of dreadful loneliness; therefore, another time when Macko came to see him, as soon as he had welcomed him, he asked him, looking through the grate in the wall:

"How is it outside?"

"Beautiful weather, like gold, and the sun warms so that all the world is pleased."

Hearing this, Zbyszko put both his hands on his neck, and raising his head, said:

"Hej, Mighty God! To have a horse and to ride on fields, on large ones!

It is dreadful for a young man to perish! It is dreadful!"

"People perish on horseback!" answered Macko.

"Bah! But how many they kill before!"

And he began to ask about the knights whom he had seen at the king's court; about Zawisza, Farurej, Powala of Taczew, about Lis of Targowisko and about all the others; what they were doing; how they amused themselves; in what honest exercises they passed the time? And he listened with avidity to Macko who told him that in the morning, the knights dressed in their armor, jumped over horses, broke ropes, tried one another's skill with swords and with axes having sharp ends made of lead; finally, he told how they feasted and what songs they sang. Zbyszko longed with heart and soul to be with them, and when he learned that Zawisza, immediately after the christening, intended to go somewhere beyond Hungary, against the Turks, he could not refrain from exclaiming:

"If they would only let me go! It would be better to perish among the pagans!"

But this could not be done. In the meanwhile something else happened. Both princesses of Mazowsze had not ceased to think about Zbyszko, who had captivated them by his youth and beauty. Finally the Princess Alexandra Ziemowitowna decided to send a letter to the grand master. It was

true that the grand master could not alter the sentence, pronounced by the castellan; but he could intercede with the king in favor of the youth. It was not right for Jagiello to show any clemency, because the offence was an attempt on the life of the envoy; but if the grand master besought the king, then the king would pardon the lad. Therefore hope entered the hearts of both princesses. Princess Alexandra being fond of the polished monk-knights, was a great favorite with them also. Very often they sent her from Marienburg, rich presents and letters in which the master called her venerable, pious benefactress and the particular protectress of the Order. Her words could do much; it was probable that her wishes would not be denied. The question now was to find a messenger, who would be zealous enough to carry the letter as soon as possible and return immediately with the answer. Having heard this, the old Macko determined without any hesitation to do it.

The castellan promised to delay the execution. Full of hope, Macko set himself to work the same day to prepare for the journey. Then he went to see Zbyszko, to tell him the good news.

At first Zbyszko was filled with as great joy, as if they had already opened the door of the tower for him. But afterward he became thoughtful and gloomy, and said:

"Who can expect anything from the Germans! Lichtenstein also could ask the king for clemency; and he could get some benefit from it because he would thus avoid your vengeance; but he will not do anything."

"He is angry because we would not apologize on the road to Tyniec. The people speak well about the master, Konrad. At any rate you will not lose anything by it."

"Sure," said Zbyszko, "but do not bow too low to him."

"I shall not. I am going with the letter from Princess Alexandra; that is all."

"Well, as you are so kind, may God help you!"

Suddenly he looked sharply at his uncle and said:

"But If the king pardon me, Lichtenstein shall be mine, not yours.

Remember!"

"You are not yet sure about your neck, therefore don't make any promises.

You have enough of those stupid vows!" said the angry old man.

Then they threw themselves into each other's arms. Zbyszko remained alone. Hope and uncertainty tossed his soul by turns; but when night came, and with it a storm, when the uncovered window was lighted by ill-omened lightnings and the walls shook with the thunder, when finally the whistling wind rushed into the tower, Zbyszko plunged, into darkness, again lost confidence; all night he could not close his eyes.

"I shall not escape death," he thought; "nothing can help me!"

But the next day, the worthy Princess Anna Januszowna came to see him, and brought Danusia who wore her little lute at her belt. Zbyszko fell at their feet; then, although he was in great distress, after a sleepless night, in woe and uncertainty, he did not forget his duty as a knight and expressed his surprise about Danusia's beauty.

But the princess looked at him sadly and said:

"You must not wonder at her; if Macko does not bring a favorable answer, or if he does not return at all, you will wonder at better things in heaven!"

Then she began to weep as she thought of the uncertain future of the little knight. Danusia wept also. Zbyszko kneeled again at their feet, because his heart became soft like heated wax in the presence of such grief. He did not love Danusia as a man loves a woman; but he felt that he loved her dearly. The sight of her had such an effect on him that he became like another man, less severe, less impetuous, less warlike. Finally great grief filled him because he must leave her before he could accomplish the vow which he had made to her.

"Poor child, I cannot put at your feet those peacock crests," said he. "But when I stand in the presence of God, I will say: 'Lord, forgive me my sins, and give *Panna* Jurandowna of Spychow all riches on earth.'"

"You met only a short time ago," said the princess. "God will not grant it!"

Zbyszko began to recollect the incident which occurred in Tynieć and his heart was melted. Finally he asked Danusia to sing for him the same song which she was singing when he seized her from the falling bench and carried her to the princess.

Therefore Danusia, although she did not feel like singing, raised her closed eyes toward the vault and began:

"If I only could get  
The wings like a birdie,  
I would fly quickly  
To my dearest Jasić!  
I would then be seated  
On the high enclosure:  
Look my dear Jasiulku – "

But suddenly the tears began to flow down her face, and she was unable to sing any more. Zbyszko seized her in his arms, as he had done in the inn at Tynieć and began to walk with her around the room, repeating in ecstasy:

"If God release me from this prison, when you grow up, if your father give his consent, I will take you for my wife! Hej!"

Danusia embraced him and hid her face on his shoulder. His grief which became greater and greater, flowed from a rustic Slavonic nature, and changed in that simple soul almost to a rustic song:

"I will take you, girl!  
I will take you!"

## CHAPTER VI

An event now happened, compared with which all other affairs lost their importance. Toward evening of the twenty-first of June, the news of the queen's sudden illness spread throughout the castle. Bishop Wysz and the other doctors remained in her room the whole night. It was known that the queen was threatened with premature confinement. The castellan of Krakow, Jasko Topor of Tenczyn, sent a messenger to the absent king that same night. The next day the news spread throughout the entire city and its environs. It was Sunday, therefore the churches were crowded. All doubt ceased. After mass the guests and the knights, who had come to be present at the festivals, the nobles and the burghers, went to the castle; the guilds and the fraternities came out with their banners. From noontide numberless crowds of people surrounded Wawel, but order was kept by the king's archers. The city was almost deserted; crowds of peasants moved toward the castle to learn some news about the health of their beloved queen. Finally there appeared in the principal gate, the bishops and the castellan, and with them other canons, king's counselors and knights. They mingled with the people telling them the news, but forbidding any loud manifestation of joy, because it would be injurious to the sick queen. They announced to all, that the queen was delivered of a daughter. This news filled the hearts of all with joy, especially when they learned, that, although the confinement was premature, there was now no danger, neither for the mother nor for the child. The people began to disperse because it was forbidden to shout near the castle and everybody wished to manifest his joy. Therefore, the streets of the city were filled immediately, and exulting songs and exclamations resounded in every corner. They were not disappointed because a girl had been born. "Was it unfortunate that King Louis had no sons and that Jadwiga became our queen? By her marriage with Jagiello, the strength of the kingdom was doubled. The same will happen again. Where can one find a richer heiress than our queen. Neither the Roman emperor nor any king possesses such dominion, nor so numerous a knighthood! There will be great competition among the monarchs for her hand; the most powerful of them will bow to our king and queen; they will come to Krakow, and we merchants will profit by it; perhaps some new domains, Bohemian or Hungarian, will be added to our kingdom."

Thus spoke the merchants among themselves, and their joy increased every moment. They feasted in the private houses and in the inns. The market place was filled with lanterns and torches. Almost till daybreak, there was great life and animation throughout the city.

During the morning, they heard more news from the castle.

They heard that the *ksiondz* Bishop Peter, had baptized the child during the night. On account of this, they feared that the little girl was not very strong. But the experienced townswomen quoted some similar cases, in which the infants had grown stronger immediately after baptism. Therefore they comforted themselves with this hope; their confidence was greatly increased by the name given to the princess.

"Neither Bonifacius nor Bonifacia can die immediately after baptism; the child so named is destined to accomplish something great," they said. "During the first years, especially during the first weeks, the child cannot do anything good or bad."

The next day, however, there came bad news from the castle concerning the infant and the mother, and the city was excited. During the whole day, the churches were as crowded as they were during the time of absolution. Votive offerings were very numerous for the queen's and princess' health. One could see poor peasants offering some grain, lambs, chickens, ropes of dried mushrooms or baskets of nuts. There came rich offerings from the knights, from the merchants and from the artisans. They sent messengers to the places where miracles were performed. Astrologers consulted the stars. In Krakow itself, they ordered numerous processions. All guilds and fraternities took part in them. There was also a children's procession because the people thought that these innocent beings would be more apt to obtain God's favor. Through the gates new crowds were coming.

Thus day after day passed, with continual ringing of bells, with the noise of the crowds in the churches, with processions and with prayers. But when at the end of a week, the beloved queen and the child were still living, hope began to enter the hearts of the people. It seemed to them impossible, that God would take from the kingdom the queen who, having done so much for it, would thus be obliged to leave so much unfinished. The scholars told how much she had done for the schools; the clergy, how much for God's glory; the statesmen, how much for peace among Christian monarchs; the jurisconsults, how much for justice; the poor people, how much for poverty. None of them could believe that the life so necessary to the kingdom and to the whole world, would be ended prematurely.

In the meanwhile on July thirteenth, the tolling bells announced the death of the child. The people again swarmed through the streets of the city, and uneasiness seized them. The crowd surrounded Wawel again, inquiring about the queen's health. But now nobody came out with good news. On the contrary, the faces of the lords entering the castle, or returning to the city, were gloomy, and every day became sadder. They said that the *ksiondz* Stanislaw of Skarbimierz, the master of liberal sciences in Krakow, did not leave the queen, who every day received holy communion. They said also, that after every communion, her room was filled with celestial light. Some had seen it through the windows; but such a sight frightened the hearts devoted to the lady; they feared that it was a sign that celestial life had already begun for her.

But everybody did not believe that such a dreadful thing could happen; they reassured themselves with the hope that the justice of heaven would be satisfied with one victim. But on Friday morning, July seventeenth, the news spread among the people that the queen was in agony. Everybody rushed toward Wawel. The city was deserted; even mothers with their infants rushed toward the gates of the castle. The stores were closed; they did not cook any food. All business was suspended; but around Wawel, there was a sea of uneasy, frightened but silent people.

At last at the thirteenth hour from noontime, the bell on the tower of the cathedral resounded. They did not immediately understand what it meant; but the people became uneasy. All heads and all eyes turned toward the tower in which was hung the tolling bell; its mournful tones were soon repeated by other bells in the city: by those at Franciscans, at Trinity, and at Panna Marya. Finally the people understood; then their souls were filled with dread and with great grief. At last a large black flag embroidered with a death's head, appeared on the tower. Then all doubt vanished: the queen had rendered her soul to God.

Beneath the castle walls resounded the roar and the cries of a hundred thousand people and mingled with the gloomy voices of the bells. Some of the people threw themselves on the ground; others tore their clothing or lacerated their faces; while others looked at the walls with silent stupefaction. Some of them were moaning; some, stretching their hands toward the church and toward the queen's room, asked for a miracle and God's mercy. But there were also heard some angry voices, which on account of despair were verging toward blasphemy:

"Why have they taken our dear queen? For what then were our processions, our prayers and our entreaties? Our gold and silver offerings were accepted and we have nothing in return for them! They took but they gave us nothing in return!" Many others weeping, repeated: "Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!" The crowds wanted to enter the castle, to look once more on the face of their queen.

This they were not permitted to do; but were promised that the body would soon be placed in the church where everyone would be allowed to view it and to pray beside it. Consequently toward evening, the sorrowing people began to return to the city, talking about the queen's last moments, about the future funeral and the miracles, which would be performed near her body and around her tomb. Some also said that immediately after her burial, the queen would be canonized, and when others said that they doubted if it could be done, many began to be angry and to threaten to go to the pope in Avignon.

A gloomy sorrow fell upon the city, and upon the whole country, not only on the common people, but on everybody; the lucky star of the kingdom was extinguished. Even to many among

the lords, everything looked black. They began to ask themselves and others, what would happen now? whether the king had the right to remain after the queen's death and rule over the country; or whether he would return to Lithuania and be satisfied with the throne of the viceroy? Some of them supposed – and the future proved that they thought correctly – that the king himself would be willing to withdraw; and that, in such an event the large provinces would separate from the crown, and the Lithuanians would again begin their attacks against the inhabitants of the kingdom. The Knights of the Cross would become stronger; mightier would become the Roman emperor and the Hungarian king; and the Polish kingdom, one of the mightiest until yesterday, would be ruined and disgraced.

The merchants, for whom waste territories in Lithuania and in Russia had been opened, foreseeing great losses, made pious vows, hoping that Jagiello might remain on the throne. But in that event, they predicted a war with the Order. It was known that the queen only could restrain his anger. The people recollected a previous occasion, when being indignant at the avidity and rapacity of the Knights of the Cross, she spoke to them in a prophetic vision: "As long as I live, I will restrain my husband's hand and his righteous anger; but remember that after my death, there will fall upon you the punishment for your sins."

In their pride and folly, they were not afraid of a war, calculating, that after the queen's death, the charm of her piety would no longer restrain the wish for affluence of volunteers from eastern countries, and that then thousands of warriors from Germany, Burgundia, France and other countries, would join the Knights of the Cross.

The death of Jadwiga was an event of such importance, that the envoy Lichtenstein, could wait no longer for the answer of the absent king; but started immediately for Marienburg, in order to communicate as soon as possible to the grand master and to the chapter the important, and in some ways, threatening news.

The Hungarian, the Austrian and the Bohemian envoys followed him or sent messengers to their monarchs. Jagiello returned to Krakow in great despair. At first he declared to the lords, that he did not wish to rule without the queen and that he would return to Litwa. Afterward, on account of his grief, he fell into such a stupor, that he could not attend to any affairs of state, and could not answer any questions. Sometimes he was very angry with himself, because he had gone away, and had not been present at the queen's death to bid her farewell and to hear her last words and wishes. In vain Stanislaw of Skarbimierz and Bishop Wysz explained to him that the queen's illness came suddenly, and that according to human calculations he would have had plenty of time to go and return if the confinement had occurred at the expected time. These words did not bring him any consolation; did not assuage his grief. "I am no king without her," he answered the bishop; "only a repentant sinner, who can receive no consolation!" After that he looked at the ground and no one could induce him to speak even one word.

Meanwhile preparations for the queen's funeral occupied all minds. From all over the country, great crowds of lords, nobles and peasants were going to Krakow. The body of the queen was placed in the cathedral on an elevation, so arranged that the end of the coffin in which the queen's head rested, was much higher than the other end. It was so arranged purposely, to enable the people to see the queen's face. In the cathedral continual prayers were offered; around the catafalque thousands of wax candles were burning. In the glare of the candles and among the flowers, she lay quiet and smiling, looking like a mystic rose. The people saw in her a saint; they brought to her those possessed with devils, the crippled and the sick children. From time to time there was heard in the church, the exclamation of some mother who perceived the color return to the face of her sick child; or the joyful voice of some paralytic man who at once was cured. Then human hearts trembled and the news spread throughout the church, the castle, and the city, and attracted more and more of such human wretchedness as only from a miracle could expect help.

## CHAPTER VII

During this time Zbyszko was entirely forgotten. Who in the time of such sorrow and misfortune, could remember about the noble lad or about his imprisonment in the tower of the castle? Zbyszko had heard, however, from the guards, about the queen's illness. He had heard the noise of the people around the castle; when he heard their weeping and the tolling of the bells, he threw himself on his knees, and having forgotten about his own lot, began to mourn the death of the worshipped lady. It seemed to him, that with her, something died within him and that after her death, there was nothing worth living for in this world.

The echo of the funeral – the church bells, the processional songs and the lamenting of the crowd, – was heard for several weeks. During that time, he grew gloomier, lost his appetite, could not sleep and walked in his underground cell like a wild beast in a cage. He suffered in solitude; there were often days during which the jailer did not bring him food nor water. So much was everybody engaged with the queen's funeral, that after her death nobody came to see him: neither the princess, nor Danusia, nor Powala of Taczew, nor the merchant Amylej. Zbyszko thought with bitterness, that as soon as Macko left the city, everybody forgot about him. Sometimes he thought that perhaps the law would forget about him also, and that he would putrefy in the prison till death. Then he prayed for death.

Finally, when after the queen's funeral one month passed, and the second commenced, he began to doubt if Macko would ever return. Macko had promised to ride quickly and not to spare his horse. Marienburg was not at the other end of the world. One could reach it and return in twelve weeks, especially if one were in haste. "But perhaps he has not hurried!" thought Zbyszko, bitterly; "perhaps he has found some woman whom he will gladly conduct to Bogdaniec, and beget his own progeny while I must wait here centuries for God's mercy."

Finally he lost all trace of time, and ceased altogether to talk with the jailer. Only by the spider web thickly covering the iron grating of the window, did he know that fall was near at hand. Whole hours he sat on his bed, his elbows resting on his knees, his fingers in his long hair. Half dreaming and stiff, he did not raise his head even when the warden bringing him food, spoke to him. But at last one day the bolts of the door creaked, and a familiar voice called him from the threshold;

"Zbyszku!"

"Uncle!" exclaimed Zbyszko, rushing from the bed.

Macko seized him in his arms, and began to kiss his fair head. Grief, bitterness and loneliness had so filled the heart of the youth, that he began to cry on his uncle's breast like a little child.

"I thought you would never come back," said he, sobbing.

"That came near being true," answered Macko.

Now Zbyszko raised his head and having looked at him, exclaimed:

"What was the matter with you?"

He looked with amazement at the emaciated and pallid face of the old warrior, at his bent figure and his gray hair.

"What was the matter with you?" he repeated.

Macko sat on the bed and for a while breathed heavily.

"What was the matter?" said he, finally.

"Hardly had I passed the frontier, before the Germans whom I met in the forest, wounded me with a crossbow. *Raubritters!* You know! I cannot breathe! God sent me help, otherwise you would not see me here."

"Who rescued you?"

"Jurand of Spychow," answered Macko.

There was a moment of silence.

"They attacked me; but half a day later he attacked them and hardly half of them escaped. He took me with him to the *grodek* and then to Spychow.

I fought with death for three weeks. God did not let me die and although I am not well yet, I have returned."

"Then you have not been in Malborg?"

"On what would I ride? They robbed me of everything and they took the letter with the other things. I returned to ask Princess Ziemowitowa for another; but I have not met her yet, and whether I will see her or not, I do not know. I must prepare for the other world!"

Having said this, he spit on the palm of his hand and stretching it toward Zbyszko, showed him blood on it, saying:

"Do you see?"

After a while he added:

"It must be God's will."

They were both silent for a time under the burden of their gloomy thoughts; then Zbyszko said:

"Then you spit blood continually?"

"How can I help it; there is a spear head half a span long between my ribs. You would spit also! I was a little better before I left Jurand of Spychow; but now I am very tired, because the way was long and I hastened."

"He; I why did you hasten?"

"Because I wished to see Princess Alexandra and get another letter from her. Jurand of Spychow said 'Go and bring the letter to Spychow. I have a few Germans imprisoned here. I will free one of them if he promise upon his knightly word to carry the letter to the gland master.' For vengeance for his wife's death, he always keeps several German captives and listens joyfully when they moan and their chains rattle. He is a man full of hatred. Understand?"

"I understand. But I wonder that you did not recover the lost letter, if Jurand captured those who attacked you."

"He did not capture all of them. Five or six escaped. Such is our lot!"

"How did they attack you? From ambush?"

"From behind such thick bushes that one could see nothing. I was riding without armor, because the merchants told me that the country was safe, and it was warm."

"Who was at the head of the robbers? A Krzyzak?"

"Not a friar, but a German. Chelminczyk of Lentz, famous for his robberies on the highway."

"What became of him?"

"Jurand chained him. But he has in his dungeons two noblemen, Mazurs, whom he wishes to exchange for himself."

There was a moment of silence.

"Dear Jesus," Zbyszko said, finally; "Lichtenstein is alive, and also that robber from Lentz; but we must perish without vengeance. They will behead me and you will not be able to live through the winter."

"Bah! I will not live even until winter. If I could only help you in some way to escape."

"Have you seen anybody here?"

"I went to see the castellan of Krakow. When I learned that Lichtenstein had departed, I thought perhaps the castellan would be less severe."

"Then Lichtenstein went away?"

"Immediately after the queen's death, he went to Marienburg. I went to see the castellan; but he answered me thus: 'They will execute your nephew, not to please Lichtenstein, but because that is his sentence. It will make no difference whether Lichtenstein be here or not. Even if he die, nothing will be changed; the law is according to justice and not like a jacket, which you can turn inside out. The king can show clemency; but no one else.'"

"And where is the king?"

"After the funeral he went to Rus'."

"Well, then there is no hope at all."

"No." The castellan said still further: "I pity him, because the Princess Anna begs for his pardon, but I cannot, I cannot!"

"Then Princess Anna is still here?"

"May God reward her! She is a good lady. She is still here, because Jurandowna is sick, and the princess loves her as her own child."

"For God's sake! Then Danusia is sick! What is the matter with her?"

"I don't know! The princess says that somebody has thrown a spell over her."

"I am sure it is Lichtenstein! Nobody else, – only Lichtenstein – a dog-brother!"

"It may be he. But what can you do to him? Nothing!"

"That is why they all seemed to have forgotten me here; she was sick."

Having said this, Zbyszko began to walk up and down the room; finally he seized Macko's hand, kissed it, and said:

"May God reward you for everything! If you die, I will be the cause of your death. Before you get any worse, you must do one thing more. Go to the castellan and beg him to release me, on my knightly word, for twelve weeks. After that time I will return, and they may behead me. But it must not be that we both die without vengeance. You know! I will go to Marienburg, and immediately send a challenge to Lichtenstein. It cannot be otherwise. One of us must die!"

Macko began to rub his forehead.

"I will go; but will the castellan permit?"

"I will give my knightly word. For twelve weeks – I do not need more."

"No use to talk; twelve weeks! And if you are wounded, you cannot return; what will they think then?"

"I will return if I have to crawl. But don't be afraid! In the meanwhile the king may return and one will be able to beseech him for clemency."

"That is true," answered Macko.

But after awhile he added:

"The castellan also told me this: 'On account of the queen's death, we forgot about your nephew; but now his sentence must be executed.'"

"Ej, he will permit," answered Zbyszko, hopefully. "He knows that a nobleman will keep his word, and it is just the same to him, whether they behead me now, or after St. Michael's day."

"Ha! I will go to-day."

"You better go to Amylej to-day, and rest awhile. He will bandage your wound, and to-morrow you can go to the castellan."

"Well, with God then!"

"With God!"

They hugged each other and Macko turned toward the door; but he stopped on the threshold and frowned as if he remembered something unpleasant.

"Bah, but you do not yet wear the girdle of a knight; Lichtenstein will tell you that he will not fight with you; what can you do then?"

Zbyszko was filled with sorrow, but only for a moment, then he said:

"How is it during war? Is it necessary that a knight choose only knights?"

"War is war; a single combat is quite different."

"True, but wait. You must find some way. Well, there is a way! Prince Janusz will dub me a knight. If the princess and Danusia ask him, he will do it. In the meantime I will fight in Mazowsze with the son of Mikolaj of Dlugolas."

"What for?"

"Because Mikolaj, the same who is with the princess and whom they call Obuch, called Danusia, 'bush.'"

Macko looked at him in amazement. Zbyszko, wishing to explain better about what had occurred, said further:

"I cannot forgive that, but I cannot fight with Mikolaj, because he must be nearly eighty years old."

To this Macko said:

"Listen! It is a pity that you should lose your head; but there will not be a great loss of brains, because you are stupid like a goat."

"Why are you angry?"

Macko did not answer, but started to leave. Zbyszko sprang toward him and said:

"How is Danusia? Is she well yet? Don't be angry for a trifle. You have been absent so long!"

Again he bent toward the old man who shrugged his shoulders and said mildly:

"Jurandowna is well, only they will not let her go out of her room yet.

Good-bye!"

Zbyszko remained alone, but he felt as if he had been regenerated. He rejoiced to think that he might be allowed to live three months more. He could go to remote lands; he could find Lichtenstein, and engage in deadly combat with him. Even the thought about that filled him with joy. He would be fortunate, to be able to ride a horse, even for twelve weeks; to be able to fight and not perish without vengeance. And then – let happen what would happen – it would be a long time anyhow! The king might return and forgive him. War might break out, and the castellan himself when he saw the victor of the proud Lichtenstein, might say: "Go now into the woods and the fields!"

Therefore a great hope entered his heart. He did not think that they would refuse to grant him those three months. He thought that perhaps they would grant him more. The old *Pan* of Tenczyn would never admit that a nobleman could not keep his word.

Therefore when Macko came to the prison, the next day toward evening, Zbyszko, who could hardly sit quiet, sprang toward him and asked:

"Granted?"

Macko sat on the truckle-bed, because he could not stand on account of his feebleness; for a while he breathed heavily and finally said:

"The castellan said: 'If you wish to divide your land, or attend to your household, then I will release your nephew for a week or two on his knightly word, but for no longer.'"

Zbyszko was so much surprised, that for a while he could not say a word.

"For two weeks?" asked he, finally. "But I could not even reach the frontier in two weeks! How is it? You did not tell the castellan why I wished to go to Marienburg?"

"Not only I, but the Princess Anna begged for you."

"And what then?"

"What? The old man told her that he did not want your head, and that he pitied you. 'If I could find,' said he, 'some law in his favor, or only a pretext, I would release him altogether; but I cannot. There would be no order in a country in which the people shut their eyes to the law, and acted according to friendship; I will not do it; even if it were Toporczyk, who is a relative of mine, or even my own brother, I would not. Such hard people are here!' And he said still further; 'We do not care about the Knights of the Cross; but we cannot bring reproach on ourselves. What would they think of us, and all our guests, coming from all parts of the world, if I release a nobleman sentenced to death, in order to give him a chance to fight? Would they believe that he will be punished, and that there is some law in our country? I prefer to order one head cut off, than to bring contempt on the king and the kingdom.' The princess told him that that was strange justice, from which even a king's relative could not obtain anything by her prayer; but the old man answered: 'The king may use clemency; but he will not tolerate lawlessness.' Then they began to quarrel because the princess grew

very angry: 'Then,' said she, 'don't keep him in the prison!' And the castellan replied to this: 'Very well! To-morrow I will order a scaffold built on the market square.' Then they departed. Only the Lord Jesus can help you."

There was a long moment of silence.

"What?" he said, gloomily. "Then it will be immediately?"

"In two or three days. There is no help. I have done what I could. I fell at the castellan's knees; I implored him for mercy, but he repeated: 'Find a law, or a pretext.' But what can I find? I went to see the *ksiondz* Stanislaw of Skarbimierz, and I begged him to come to you. At least you will have this honor, that the same priest who heard the queen's confession will hear yours. But I did not find him home; he had gone to Princess Anna."

"Perhaps for Danusia!"

"Not at all. The girl is better. I will go see him to-morrow early in the morning. They say that if he bears one's confession, salvation is as sure as if you had it in your pocket."

Zbyszko put his elbows on his knees and dropped his head so that his hair covered his face entirely. The old man looked at him a long time and finally began to call him softly:

"Zbyszku! Zbyszku!"

The boy raised his head. His face had an expression of anger and of cold hatred, but not of weakness.

"What?"

"Listen carefully; perhaps I have found a way of escape."

Having said this, he approached and began to whisper:

"Have you heard about Prince Witold, who at one time, being imprisoned by our king in Krewo, went out from the prison disguised in a woman's dress. There is no woman who will remain here instead of you, but take my *kubrak*.<sup>[57]</sup> Take my cowl and go – understand? They will not notice. It is dark behind the door. They will not flash a light into your eyes. They saw me yesterday going out; but they did not look at me closely. Be quiet and listen. They will find me here to-morrow – and what then? Will they cut my head off? That will be no satisfaction, because I will die anyhow in three or four weeks. And you, as soon as you are out of here, to horse, and go straight to Prince Witold. You will present yourself to him; you will bow before him; he will receive you and you will be as safe with him as if you were sitting at God's right hand. They say here that the *kniaz*'s armies have been defeated by the Tartars, because the late queen prophesied defeat. If it be true, the *kniaz* will need soldiers and he will welcome you. You must remain with him, because there is no better service in the world. If our king were defeated in a war, it would be his end; but there is such an amount of shrewdness in *Kniaz* Witold, that after a defeat he grows still more powerful. And he is liberal also, and he loves our family. Tell him everything that happened. Tell him that you wanted to go with him against the Tartars; but you could not because you were imprisoned in the tower. If God permit, he will give you some land and peasants; he will dub you a knight and he will intercede for you with the king. He is a good protector – you will see! – What?"

Zbyszko listened silently, and Macko, as if he was excited by his own words, spoke further:

"You must not perish young, but return to Bogdaniec. And when you return, you must immediately take a wife so that our family does not perish. Only when you have children, may you challenge Lichtenstein to fight until death; but before that, you must abstain from seeking vengeance. Take my *kubrak* now, take my cowl and go, in God's name."

Having said this, Macko stood up and began to undress; but Zbyszko arose also, stopped him and said:

"I will not do it, so help me God and Holy Cross."

"Why?" asked Macko, astonished.

"Because I will not!"

Macko became pale with anger.

"I wish you had never been born!"

"You told the castellan," said Zbyszko, "that you would give your head in exchange for mine."

"How do you know that?"

"The *Pan* of Taczew told me."

"What of it?"

"What of it? The castellan told you that disgrace would fall on me and on all my family. Would it not be a still greater disgrace, if I escaped from here, and left you to the vengeance of the law?"

"What vengeance? What can the law do to me, when I must die just the same? Have common sense, for God's mercy!"

"May God punish me if I abandon you now when you are old and sick. Tfu! shame!"

There was silence; one could only hear the heavy, hoarse breathing of Macko, and the archers' calls.

"Listen," Macko said, finally, in broken tones, "it was not shameful for *Kniaz* Witold to escape from Krewo; it would not be for you, either."

"Hej!" answered Zbyszko, with sadness "You know! *Kniaz* Witold is a great *kniaz*; he received a crown from the king's hand, also riches and dominion; but I, a poor nobleman, have only my honor."

After a while he exclaimed in a sudden burst of anger:

"Then you do not understand that I love you, and that I will not give your head instead of mine?"

At this, Macko stood on his trembling feet, stretched out his hands, and although the nature of the people of those days, was hard, as if forged of iron, he cried suddenly in a heartbroken voice:

"Zbyszku!"

## CHAPTER VIII

The next day, the court servants began to make preparations in the market square, to build the scaffold which was to be erected opposite the principal gate of the city hall.

The princess, however, was still consulting with Wojciech Jastrzemiec, Stanislaw of Skarbimierz and other learned canons, who were familiar with the written laws and also with the laws sanctioned by custom.

She was encouraged in these efforts by the castellan's words, when he said, that if they showed him "law or pretext," he would free Zbyszko. Therefore they consulted earnestly, to ascertain if there were any law or custom that would do. Although the *ksiondz* Stanislaw, had prepared Zbyszko for death and administered the last sacraments, he went directly from the prison to the consultation, which lasted almost till daybreak.

The day of execution arrived. From early morning, crowds of people had begun to gather on the market square, because the decapitation of a nobleman excited more curiosity than that of a common criminal. The weather was beautiful. News of the youth and great beauty of the sentenced man, spread among the women. Therefore the whole road leading to the castle, was filled with crowds of townswomen, dressed in their best; in the windows on the market square, and on the balconies, could be seen velvet bonnets, or the fair heads of young girls, ornamented only with wreaths of lilies and roses. The city councilors, although the affair did not belong in their jurisdiction, all appeared, in order to show their importance and placed themselves near the scaffold. The knights, wishing to show their sympathy for the young man, gathered in great numbers around the elevation. Behind them swarmed the gayly dressed crowd, composed of small merchants and artisans dressed in their guild costumes. Over this compact mass of human heads, one could see the scaffold which was covered with new broadcloth. On the elevation stood the executioner, a German, with broad shoulders, dressed in a red *kubrak* and on his head a cowl of the same color; he carried a heavy two-edged sword; with him were two of his assistants with naked arms and ropes at their girdles. There were also a block and a coffin covered with broadcloth. In Panna Maryia's tower, the bells were ringing, filling the town with metallic sounds and scaring the flocks of doves and jackdaws. The people looked at the scaffold, and at the executioner's sword protruding from it and shining in the sun. They also looked at the knights, on whom the burghers always gazed with respect and eagerness. This time it was worth while looking at them. The most famous knights were standing round the elevation. They admired the broad shoulders and dark hair, falling in abundant curls of Zawisza Czarny; they admired the short square figure of Zyndram of Maszkow as well as the gigantic stature of Paszko Zlodziej of Biskupice; the threatening face of Wojciech of Wodzinek and the great beauty of Dobko of Olesnica, who at the tournament in Torun had defeated twelve knights; they looked admiringly at Zygmunt of Bobowa, who became equally famous in Koszyce in a fight with the Hungarians, at Krzon of Kozioglowy, at Lis of Targowisko, who was victorious in duels, and at Staszko of Charbimowice who was able to catch a running horse.

General attention was also attracted by the pale face of Macko of Bogdanice; he was supported by Floryan of Korytnica and Marcin of Wrocimowice. It was generally thought that he was the sentenced man's father.

But the greatest curiosity was aroused by Powala of Taczew who, standing in front, was holding Danusia, dressed in white, with a wreath of green rue resting on her fair hair. The people did not understand what it meant, nor why this young girl was present to look at the execution. Some of them thought she was a sister; others, that she was the knight's lady; but none were able to explain the meaning of her dress or of her presence at the scaffold. The sight of her fair face covered with tears, aroused commiseration and emotion. The people began to criticise the castellan's stubbornness, and

the severity of the laws. Those criticisms gradually changed to threats. Finally, here and there, some voices were heard to say, that if the scaffold were destroyed, then the execution would be postponed.

The crowd became eager and excited. They said that if the king were present, he would surely pardon the youth.

But all became quiet when distant shoutings announced the approach of the king's archers, escorting the prisoner. The procession soon appeared in the market square. It was preceded by a funeral fraternity, the members of which were dressed in long black cloaks, and were covered with veils of the same color, which had openings cut for the eyes. The people were afraid of these gloomy figures and became silent. They were followed by a detachment of soldiers, armed with crossbows, and dressed in elk-skin jerkins; these were the king's Lithuanian guards. Behind them one could see the halberds of another detachment of soldiers. In the centre, between the clerk of the court, who was going to read the sentence, and the *ksiondz* Stanislaw of Skarbimierz who was carrying a crucifix, walked Zbyszko.

All eyes now turned toward him, and at all the windows and from all the balconies, women's heads protruded. Zbyszko was dressed in his white "*jaka*," embroidered with golden griffins and ornamented with gold galoon; in these magnificent clothes he looked like a young prince, or the page of a wealthy court. His broad shoulders and chest and his powerful haunches indicated that he was already a full-grown man; but above that strong figure of a man, appeared a childish face with down on the upper lip. It was a beautiful face like that of a king's page, with golden hair cut evenly over the eyebrows and falling on the shoulders. He walked erect, but was very pale. From time to time he looked at the crowd as if he was dreaming; he looked at the church towers, toward the flocks of jackdaws, and at the bells, ringing his last hour; then his face expressed amazement when he realized that the sobbing of the women, and all this solemnity was for him. Finally, he perceived the scaffold and the executioner's red figure standing on it. Then he shivered and made the sign of the Cross; the priest gave him the crucifix to kiss. A few steps further, a bouquet of roses thrown by a young girl, fell at his feet. Zbyszko stooped, picked up the bouquet and smiled at the girl who began to cry. But evidently he thought that, amidst these crowds and in the presence of these women, waving their kerchiefs from the windows, he must die courageously and at least leave behind him the reputation of "a brave man;" therefore he strained his courage and will to the utmost. With a sudden movement, he threw his hair back, raised his head still higher and walked proudly, almost like a conqueror, whom, according to knightly custom, they conduct to get the prize. The procession advanced slowly, because the crowd was dense and unwillingly made way. In vain the Lithuanian guard, marching in front, shouted: "*Eyk szalin! Eyk szalin!* go away!" The people did not wish to understand these words, and surrounded the soldiers more closely. Although about one-third of the burghers of Krakow were Germans, still there were heard on all sides, threats against the Knights of the Cross: "Shame! Shame! May they perish, those wolves! Must they cut off children's heads for them! Shame on the king and on the kingdom!" The Lithuanians seeing the resistance, took their crossbows from their shoulders, and menaced the crowd; but they did not dare to attack without orders. The captain sent some men to open the way with their halberds and in that manner they reached the knights standing around the scaffold.

They stepped aside without any resistance. The men with halberds entered first, and were followed by Zbyszko, accompanied by the priest and the clerk of the court. At that moment something happened which nobody had expected. From among the knights, Powala stepped forward with Danusia in his arms and shouted: "Stop!" with such a powerful voice, that the retinue stopped at once, as if rooted to the ground. Neither the captain, nor any of the soldiers dared to oppose the lord and knight, whom they were accustomed to see every day in the castle and often in confidential conversation with the king. Finally, other knights, equally distinguished, also began to shout with commanding voices:

"Stop! Stop!" In the meantime, the *Pan* of Taczew approached Zbyszko and handed Danusia to him.

Zbyszko caught her in his arms and pressed her to his chest, bidding her farewell; but Danusia instead of nestling to him and embracing him, immediately took her white veil from her head and wrapped it around Zbyszko's head, and began to cry in her tearful, childish voice:

"He is mine! He is mine!"

"He is hers!" shouted the powerful voices of the knights. "To the castellan!"

A shout, like the roar of thunder, answered: "To the castellan! To the castellan!" The priest raised his eyes, the clerk looked confused, the captain and his soldiers dropped their arms; everybody understood what had happened.

There was an old Polish and Slavonic custom, as strong as the law, known in Podhale, around Krakow, and even further. If a young girl threw her veil on a man conducted to death, as a sign that she wished to marry him, by so doing she saved his life. The knights, farmers, villagers and townsmen all knew this custom; and the Germans living in the old cities and towns, had heard about it. The old man, Macko, almost fainted with emotion; the knights having pushed away the guards, surrounded Zbyszko and Danusia; the joyful people shouted again and again: "To the castellan! To the castellan!"

The crowd moved suddenly, like the waves of the sea. The executioner and his assistants rushed down from the scaffold. Everybody understood that if Jasko of Tenczyn resisted the custom, there would be a riot in the city. In fact the people now rushed to the scaffold. In the twinkling of an eye, they pulled off the cloth and tore it into pieces; then the beams and planks, pulled by strong arms, or cut with axes, began to crack, then a crash, and a few moments later there was not a trace left of the scaffold.

Zbyszko, holding Danusia in his arms, was going to the castle, but this time like a true victor, – triumphant. With him were marching joyfully the most noted knights in the kingdom; thousands of men, women and children were shouting and singing, stretching their arms toward Danusia and praising the beauty and courage of both. At the windows the townswomen were clasping their hands, and everywhere one could see faces covered with tears of joy. A shower of roses, lilies, ribbons and even gold rings were thrown to the lucky youth; he, beaming like the sun, with his heart full of gratitude, embraced his sweet lady from time to time and sometimes kissed her hands. This sight made the townswomen feel so tender, that some of them threw themselves into the arms of their lovers, telling them that if they encountered death, they also would be freed. Zbyszko and Danusia became the beloved children of the knights, burghers and common people. Macko, whom Floryan of Korytnica and Marcin of Wrocimowice were assisting to walk, was almost beside himself with joy. He wondered why he had not even thought about this means of assistance. Amidst the general bustle, Powala of Taczew told the knights that this remedy had been discovered by Wojciech Jastrzemiec and Stanislaw of Skarbimierz, both experts in the written laws and customs. The knights were all amazed at its simplicity, saying among themselves, that nobody else would have thought about that custom, because the city was inhabited by Germans, and it had not been used for a long time.

Everything, however, still depended on the castellan. The knights and the people went to the castle, which was occupied by *Pan* Krakowski during the king's absence. The clerk of the court, the *ksiondz* Stanislaw of Skarbimierz, Zawisza, Farurej, Zyndram of Maszkow and Powala of Taczew explained to him the power of the custom and reminded him of what he had said himself, that if he found "law or pretext," then he would release the prisoner immediately. And could there be any better law, than the old custom which had never been abolished?

The *Pan* of Tenczyn answered that this custom applied more to the common people and to robbers, than to the nobles; but he knew the law very well, and could not deny its validity. Meanwhile he covered his silvery beard with his hand and smiled, because he was very much pleased. Finally he went to the low portico, accompanied by Princess Anna Danuta, a few priests and the knights.

Zbyszko having perceived him, lifted Danusia again; the old castellan placed his hand on her golden hair, and gravely and benevolently inclined his hoary head. The assembled people understood

this sign and shouted so that the walls of the castle were shaken: "May God preserve you! Long life, just lord! Live and judge us!"

Then the people cheered Zbyszko and Danusia when a moment later, they both went to the portico, fell at the feet of the good Princess Anna Danuta, who had saved Zbyszko's life, because she, together with the scholars, had found the remedy and had taught Danusia how to act.

"Long life to the young couple!" shouted Powala of Taczew.

"Long life!" repeated the others. The castellan, hoary with age, turned toward the princess and said:

"Gracious princess, the betrothal must be performed immediately, because the custom requires it!"

"The betrothal will take place immediately," answered the good lady, whose face was irradiated with joy; "but for the wedding, they must have the consent of Jurand of Spychow."

## **END OF PART FIRST**

## PART SECOND

### CHAPTER I

In merchant Amylej's house, Macko and Zbyszko were deliberating what to do. The old knight expected to die soon, and Father Cybek, a Franciscan friar who had experience in treating wounds, predicted the same; therefore he wanted to return to Bogdaniec to die and be buried beside his forefathers in the cemetery in Ostrow.

But not all of his forefathers were buried there. In days of yore it had been a numerous family of *wlodykas*. During the war their cry was: "Grady!" On their shields, because they claimed to be better *wlodykas* than the others who had no right to a coat of arms, they had emblazoned a Tempa Podkowa. In 1331, in the battle of Plowce, seventy warriors from Bogdaniec were killed in the marshes by German archers. Only one Wojciech, called Tur, escaped. After this defeat by the Germans, the king, Wladyslaw Lokietek, granted him a coat of arms and the estate of Bogdaniec as a special privilege. Wojciech returned home, only to discover the complete annihilation of his family.

While the men of Bogdaniec were perishing from German arrows, the *Raubritters* of Szlonsk fell upon their homes, burned their buildings, and slaughtered or took into slavery the peasants. Wojciech remained alone, the heir of a large but devastated tract of land, which formerly belonged to the whole family of *wlodykas*. Five years afterward he married and he begot two sons, Jasko and Macko. Afterward he was killed in a forest by an urus.[58]

The sons grew up under the mother's care. Her maiden name was Kachna of Spalenica. She was so brave that she conducted two successful expeditions against the Germans of Szlonsk to avenge former wrongs; but in the third expedition she was killed. Before that, however, she built with the help of the slaves, a *grodek*[59] in Bogdaniec; on account of that, Jasko and Macko, although from their former estates of *wlodykas* were called *wlodykas*, now became men of importance. When Jasko became of age, he married Jagienka of Mocarzew, and begot Zbyszko; Macko remained unmarried. He took care of his nephew's property as far as his war expeditions permitted.

But when during the civil war between Grzymalits and Nalenczs, Bogdaniec was again burned and the peasants scattered, Macko could not restore it, although he toiled for several years. Finally he pledged the land to his relative, the abbot, and with Zbyszko who was small, he went to Lithuania to fight against the Germans.

But he had never forgotten about Bogdaniec. He went to Litwa hoping to become rich from booty so as to return to Bogdaniec, redeem the land from his pledge, colonize it with slaves, rebuild the *grodek* and settle Zbyszko on it. Therefore now, after Zbyszko's lucky deliverance, they were discussing this matter at the house of the merchant, Amylej.

They had money enough to redeem the land they possessed quite a fortune gathered from the booty, from the ransoms paid by the knights captured by them, and from Witold's presents. They had received great benefit from that fight with the two Fryzjan knights. The suits of armor alone, were worth what was considered in those times quite a fortune; beside the armor, they had captured wagons, people, clothes, money and rich implements of war. The merchant Amylej had just purchased many of these things, and among them two pieces of beautiful Flemish broadcloth. Macko sold the splendid armor, because he thought that he would have no use for it. The merchant sold it the next day to Marcin of Wrocimowice, whose coat of arms was Polkoza. He sold it for a large sum, because in those times the suits of armor made in Milan were considered the best in the world and were expensive. Zbyszko regretted very much that they sold it.

"If God give you back your health," said he, to his uncle, "where will you find another like it?"

"There, where I found this one; on some German," answered Macko. "But I shall not escape death. The head of the spear will not come out from my body. When I tried to pull it out with my hands, I pushed it in further. And now there is no help."

"You must drink two or three pots of bear's grease."

"Bah! Father Cybek also said that would be a good thing. But where can I get it here? In Bogdaniec one could very easily kill a bear!"

"Then we must go to Bogdaniec! Only you must not die on the road."

Old Macko looked at his nephew with tenderness.

"I know where you would like to go; to the Prince Janusz's court, or to Jurand of Spychow, and fight the Germans of Chelminsko."

"I will not deny it. I would be glad to go to Warszawa with the princess' court, or to go to Ciechanow; and I would remain as long as possible with Danusia, because now she is not only my lady, but my love also. I tremble when I think of her! I shall follow her even to the end of the world; but now you are first. You did not desert me, therefore I will never abandon you. We must go to Bogdaniec."

"You are a good man," said Macko.

"God would punish me, if I were not mindful of you. Look, they are getting ready! I ordered one wagon to be filled with hay. Amylejowna has made us a present of a feather bed, but I am afraid it will be too warm for you. We will travel slowly, in company with the princess' court, so that you may have good care. When they turn toward Mazowsze, we will turn toward home; may God help us!"

"If I can only live long enough to rebuild the *grodek*!" exclaimed Macko. "I know that after my death, you will not think anything more about Bogdaniec."

"Why will I not?"

"Because your head will be filled with thoughts of battles and of love."

"Did you not think yourself about war? I have planned what I must do; in the first place, I will rebuild the *grodek*."

"Do you mean to do that?" asked Macko, "Well, and when the *grodek* is finished?"

"When the *grodek* is rebuilt, then I will go to Warszawa to the prince's court, or to Ciechanow."

"After my death?"

"If you die soon, then after your death; but before I go, I will bury you properly; if the Lord Jesus restore your health, then you will remain in Bogdaniec. The princess promised me that I should receive my knightly girdle from the prince. Otherwise Lichtenstein will not fight with me."

"Then afterward you will go to Marienburg?"

"To Marienburg, or even to the end of the world to reach Lichtenstein."

"I do not blame you for it! Either he or you must die!"

"I will bring his girdle and his gloves to Bogdaniec; do not be frightened!"

"You must look out for treachery. There is plenty among them."

"I will bow to Prince Janusz and ask him to send to the grand master for a safe conduct. There is peace now. I will go to Marienburg, where there are always many knights. Then you know? In the first place, Lichtenstein; then I will look for those who wear peacock's tufts, and I will challenge them in turn. If the Lord Jesus grant me victory, then I will fulfill my vow."

Speaking thus, Zbyszko smiled at his own thoughts; his face was like that of a lad who tells what knightly deeds he will perform when he is a man.

"Hej!" said Macko; "if you defeat three knights belonging to great families, then you will not only fulfill your vow, but you will bring some booty!"

"Three!" exclaimed Zbyszko. "In the prison I promised myself, that I would not be selfish with Danusia. As many knights as I have fingers on both hands!"

Macko shrugged his shoulders.

"Are you surprised?" said Zbyszko. "From Marienburg I shall go to Jurand of Spychow. Why should I not bow to him, he is Danusia's father? With him I shall attack the Germans of Chelminsko."

You told me yourself that in the whole of Mazowsze there was no greater ware-wolf against the Germans."

"And if he will not give you Danusia?"

"Why not? He is seeking his vengeance. I am searching for mine. Can he find a better man? And then, the princess has given her consent for the betrothal; he will not refuse."

"I see one thing," said Macko, "you will take all the people from Bogdaniec in order to have a retinue, as is proper for a knight, and the land will remain without hands to till it. As long as I live, I will not let you do it; but after my death, I see, you will take them."

"The Lord God will help me to get a retinue; Janko of Tulcza is a relation of ours and he will help me also."

At that moment the door opened, and as though to prove that the Lord God would help Zbyszko get a retinue, two men entered. They were dark-complexioned, short, dressed in Jewish-like yellow caftans, red caps and very wide trousers. They stopped in the doorway and touched their fingers to their foreheads, to their mouths, and then to their chests; then they bowed to the ground.

"Who are these devils?" asked Macko. "Who are you?"

"Your slaves," answered the newcomers in broken Polish.

"For what reason? Where from? Who sent you here?"

"*Pan Zawisza* sent us here as a present to the young knight, to be his slaves."

"O for God's sake! two men more!" exclaimed Macko, joyfully.

"Of what nationality are you?"

"We are Turks!"

"Turks?" repeated Zbyszko. "I shall have two Turks in my retinue. Have you ever seen Turks?"

And having jumped toward them, he began to turn them around and to look at them curiously. Macko said:

"I have never seen them; but I have heard, that the *Pan* of Garbow has Turks in his service whom he captured while fighting on the Danube with the Roman emperor, Zygmunt. How is it? Are you heathens, your dog-brothers?"

"The lord ordered us to be baptized," said one of the slaves.

"Did you have no money for ransom?"

"We are from far lands, from Asiatic shores, from Brussa."

Zbyszko, who always listened gladly to war stories, and especially when there was anything told about the deeds of the famous Zawisza of Garbow, began to inquire how they were captured. But there was nothing extraordinary in their narration; Zawisza attacked them in a ravine, part of them perished and part were captured; and he sent the prisoners as presents to his different friends. Zbyszko and Macko's hearts were throbbing at the sight of such a noble gift, especially as it was difficult to get men in those days and the possession of them constituted true wealth.

In the meanwhile, Zawisza himself accompanied by Powala and Paszko Zlodzie; of Biskupice arrived. As they had all worked hard to free Zbyszko, they were pleased when they succeeded; therefore everyone of them gave him some present as a souvenir. The liberal *Pan* of Taczew gave him a beautiful large caparison embroidered with gold; Paszko, a Hungarian sword and ten *grzywiens*.<sup>[60]</sup> Then came Lis of Targowisko, Farurej and Krzon of Kozieglowy, with Marcin of Wrocimowice and finally Zyndram of Maszkow; everyone brought rich presents.

Zbyszko welcomed them with a joyful heart, feeling very happy on account of the presents and because the most famous knights in the kingdom were showing him their friendship. They asked him about his departure and Macko's health, recommending to the latter, different remedies which would miraculously heal wounds.

But Macko recommended Zbyszko to their care, being ready himself for the other world. He said that it was impossible to live with an iron spear head between the ribs. He complained also that he spit blood and could not eat. A quart of shelled nuts, a sausage two spans long and a dish of boiled

eggs were all he could eat at once. Father Cybek had bled him several times, hoping in that way to draw out the fever from around his heart, and restore his appetite; but it had not helped him any.

But he was so pleased with the presents given to his nephew, that at that moment he was feeling better, and when the merchant, Amylej, ordered a barrel of wine brought in honor of such famous guests, Macko drank with them. They began to talk about Zbyszko's deliverance and about his betrothal with Danusia. The knights did not doubt that Jurand of Spychow would give his consent, especially if Zbyszko avenged the death of Danusia's mother and captured the peacock tufts.

"But as for Lichtenstein," said Zawisza, "I do not think he will accept your challenge, because he is a friar, and also one of the officers in the Order. Bah! The people of his retinue told me that perhaps he would be elected grand master!"

"If he refuse to fight, he will lose his honor," said Lis of Targowisko.

"No," answered Zawisza, "because he is not a lay knight; and a friar is not permitted to fight in single combat."

"But it often happens that they do fight."

"Because the Order has become corrupt. The knights make different vows; but they often break them, thus setting a bad example to the whole Christian world. But a Krzyzak, especially a *comthur*, is not obliged to accept a challenge."

"Ha! Then only in war can you reach him."

"But they say, that there will be no war," said Zbyszko, "because the Knights of the Cross are afraid of our nation."

To this Zyndram of Maszkow said:

"This peace will not last long. There cannot be a good understanding with the wolf, because he must live on the goods of others."

"In the meantime, perhaps we will be obliged to fight with Tymur the lame," said Powala. "Prince Witold was defeated by Edyga; that is certain."

"Certain. *Wojewoda* Spytko will not return," said Paszko Zlodziej of Biskupice.

"The late queen prophesied it would be so," said the *Pan* of Taczew.

"Ha! Then perhaps we will be obliged to go against Tymur."

Here the conversation was turned to the Lithuanian expedition against the Tartars. There was no doubt that Prince Witold, that able commander being rather impetuous, had been badly defeated at Worskla, where a great number of the Lithuanian *bojars* and also a few Polish knights were killed. The knights now gathered in Amylej's house, pitied especially Spytke of Melsztyn, the greatest lord in the kingdom, who went with the expedition as a volunteer; and after the battle he was lost – nobody knew where. They praised his chivalrous deed, and told how he, having received from the commander of the enemy a protective *kolpak*,<sup>[61]</sup> would not wear it during the battle, preferring honorable death to life granted him by the ruler of a heathen nation. But it was not certain yet, whether he had perished, or was in captivity. If he were a prisoner, he could pay his ransom himself, because his riches were enormous, and he also held in fief the whole Podole from King Wladyslaw.

But the defeat of Witold's army might prove ruinous to the whole of Jagiello's empire. Nobody knew when the Tartars, encouraged by the victory over Witold, might now invade the lands and cities belonging to the grand dukedom. In that case the kingdom of Poland would be involved in a war. Therefore many knights, who like Zawisza, Farurej, Dobko and even Powala, were accustomed to seek adventures and fights in foreign countries, remained in Krakow not knowing what might soon happen. In case Tamerlan, who was the ruler of twenty-seven states, moved the whole Mongolian world, then the peril to the kingdom would be great.

"If it be necessary, then we will measure our swords with the lame. With us it will not be such an easy matter as it was with those other nations, which he conquered and exterminated. Then the other Christian princes will help us."

To this Zyndram of Maszkow, who especially hated the Order, said bitterly:

"I do not know about the princes; but the Knights of the Cross are ready to become friends even with the Tartars and attack us from the other side."

"Then we shall have a war!" exclaimed Zbyszko. "I am against the Krzyzaks!"

But the other knights began to contradict Zyndram. "The Knights of the Cross have no fear of God, and they seek only their own advantage; but they will not help the pagans against Christian people. And then Tymur is at war somewhere in Asia, and the commander of the Tartars, Edyga, lost so heavily in the battle, that he is afraid even of victory. Prince Witold is a man full of expedients, and you may be sure he took precautions; and even if this time the Lithuanians were not successful, at any rate it is not a new thing for them to overcome the Tartars."

"We have to fight for life and death; not with the Tartars but with the Germans," said Zyndram of Maszkow, "and if we do not crush them, our peril will come from them."

Then he turned toward Zbyszko:

"And in the first place Mazowsze will perish. You will always find plenty to do there; be not afraid!"

"Hej! if my uncle were well, I would go there immediately."

"God help you!" said Powala, raising a glass.

"Yours and Danusia's health!"

"To the destruction of the Germans!" added Zyndram of Maszkow.

Then they began to say farewell. At that moment one of the princess' courtiers entered with a falcon on his arm; and having bowed to the knights who were present, he turned with a peculiar smile to Zbyszko:

"The lady princess wished me to tell you," said he, "that she will stay in Krakow over night, and will start on the journey to-morrow."

"That is well," said Zbyszko; "but why? Is anybody sick?"

"No. But the princess has a visitor from Mazowsze."

"The prince himself?"

"Not the prince, but Jurand of Spychow," answered the courtier.

Having heard this, Zbyszko became very much confused, and his heart began to throb as it did when they read the sentence of death to him.

## CHAPTER II

Princess Anna was not much surprised at the arrival of Jurand of Spychow. It used to happen, that during the continual attacks and fights with neighboring German knights, a sudden longing for Danusia seized him. Then he would appear unexpectedly in Warszawa, in Ciechanow, or wherever Prince Janusz's court was situated for the time being.

Every time he saw the child, his grief burst forth anew because Danusia looked like her mother. The people thought that his iron heart filled with feelings of vengeance, would become softer through such grief. The princess often tried to persuade him to abandon his bloody Spychow, and remain at the court near Danusia. The prince himself, appreciating his bravery and importance, and at the same time wishing to spare him the fatigue inevitable in the quarrels on the frontier, offered him the office of sword bearer. It was always in vain. The sight of Danusia opened the old wounds in his heart. After a few days he always lost his appetite, could not sleep, and became silent. Evidently his heart began to bleed, and finally he would disappear from the court and returned to the marshes of Spychow, in order to drown in blood his grief and anger. Then the people used to say: "Woe to the Germans! It is true they are not sheep; but they are sheep to Jurand, because he is a wolf to them." In fact, after a time, the news would spread about the volunteers who, going to join the Knights of the Cross, were captured on their journey; about burned towns, and captured peasants; or about deadly fights from which the terrible Jurand always emerged victorious. On account of the rapacious disposition of the Mazurs and of the German knights who were holding the land and the strongholds from the Order, even during the greatest peace between the prince of Mazowsze and the Order, continual fighting was going on near the frontier. Even when cutting wood in the forests or harvesting in the fields, the inhabitants used to carry their arms. The people living there felt no certainty for the morrow; were in continual readiness for war, and were hard-hearted. Nobody was satisfied with defence only; but for pillage repaid with pillage; for conflagration, with conflagration; for invasion, with invasion. It often happened that while the Germans were stealing through the forest, to attack some stronghold and to seize the peasants or the cattle, at the same time, the Mazurs were doing the same. Sometimes they met, then they fought; but often only the leaders challenged each other for a deadly fight, after which the conqueror took the retinue of his defeated adversary. Therefore, when complaints were received at the Warsawian court about Jurand, the prince used to reply with complaints about the attacks made by the Germans. Thus both sides asked for justice, but neither was willing to grant it; all robberies, conflagrations and invasions went unpunished.

But Jurand dwelling in Spychow, surrounded by marshes overgrown with rushes, and being filled with an unquenchable desire for vengeance, was so dreaded by his German neighbors, that finally their fear became greater than their courage. The lands bordering upon Spychow, were lying fallow; the forests were overgrown with wild hops and the meadows with reeds. Several German knights tried to settle in the neighborhood of Spychow; but everyone of them after a time, preferred to abandon his estate held in fief, his herds and his peasants, rather than live near this implacable man. Very often the knights planned a common expedition against Spychow; but everyone ended in defeat. They tried different means. One time they brought from the province of Mein, a knight noted for his strength and cruelty, and who had always been victorious in all fights. He challenged Jurand. But as soon as they entered the lists, the German was so frightened at the sight of the dreadful Mazur, that he wheeled his horse intending to flee; Jurand pierced his defenceless back with a spear, and in that way dishonored him forever. After that still greater fear filled the neighbors, and if a German perceived even from afar Spychowian smoke, he immediately crossed himself and began to pray to his patron in heaven. It was generally believed that Jurand had sold his soul to the evil one for the sake of vengeance.

The people told dreadful tales about Spychow: they said that the path leading to it through the quaggy marshes which were overgrown with duck weed and had bottomless depths, was so narrow that two men on horseback could not ride abreast; that on each side there were many Germans' bones, and that during the night, the heads of drowned men were seen walking on spiders' legs, howling and drawing travelers on horses into the depths. They also said that the gate in the *grodek* was ornamented with skeletons. These stories were not true. But in the barred pits dug under the house in Spychow, there were always many groaning prisoners; and Jurand's name was more dreadful than those tales about the skeletons and drowned people.

Zbyszko having learned of Jurand's arrival, hastened to him, but with a certain uneasiness in his heart because he was Danusia's father. Nobody could forbid him choose Danusia for the lady of his thoughts; but afterward the princess had betrothed them. What will Jurand say to that? Will he consent? What will happen if he refuse his consent? These questions filled his heart with fear, because he now cared for Danusia more than for anything else in the world. He was only encouraged by the thought that perhaps Jurand would praise him for having attacked Lichtenstein, because he had done it to avenge Danusia's mother; and in consequence had nearly lost his own head.

In the meantime he began to question the courtier, who had come to Amylej's for him:

"Where are you conducting me?" asked he; "to the castle?"

"Yes, to the castle. Jurand is with the princess' court."

"Tell me, what kind of a man he is, so that I may know how to talk with him!"

"What can I tell you! He is a man entirely different from other men. They say that he was mirthful before his blood became seared in his heart!"

"Is he clever?"

"He is cunning; he robs others but he does not let others rob him. Hej! He has only one eye, because the other was destroyed by the thrust of a German crossbow; but with that one, he can look a man through and through. He loves no one except the princess, our lady; and he loves her because his wife was a lady from her court, and now his daughter is with her."

Zbyszko breathed.

"Then you think that he will not oppose the princess' will?"

"I know what you would like to learn, and therefore I will tell you what I heard. The princess spoke to him about your betrothment, because it would not be proper to conceal it from him; but it is not known what he said in reply."

While thus speaking, they arrived at the gate. The captain of the archers, the same who had conducted Zbyszko to the scaffold, now saluted them. After having passed the guards, they entered the court-yard and turned to the left toward the part of the castle occupied by the princess.

The courtier meeting a servant in the doorway, asked:

"Where is Jurand of Spychow?"

"In the '*krzywy*[62] room' with his daughter."

"It is there," said the courtier, pointing at the door.

Zbyszko crossed himself, raised the curtain in the doorway, and entered with throbbing heart. But he did not perceive Jurand and Danusia at once, because the room was not only "crooked" but dark also. But after a while he saw the fair head of the girl, who was sitting on her father's lap. They did not hear him when he entered; therefore he stopped near the door, and finally he said:

"May He be blessed!"

"For ages and ages," answered Jurand, rising.

At that moment Danusia sprang toward the young knight and having seized him with both hands, began to scream:

"Zbyszku! *Tatus*[63] is here!"

Zbyszko kissed her hands; then he approached Jurand, and said:

"I came to bow to you; you know who I am."

And he bent slightly, making a movement with his hands as if he wished to seize Jurand by his knees. But Jurand grasped his hand, turned him toward the light and began to look at him.

Zbyszko had already regained his self-possession; therefore he looked with curiosity at Jurand. He beheld before him a gigantic man with fallow hair and moustache, with a face pitted with smallpox and one eye of iron-like color. It seemed to him as if this eye would pierce him, and he again became confused. Finally, not knowing what to say, but wishing to say something to break the embarrassing silence, he asked:

"Then you are Jurand of Spychow, Danusia's father?"

But the other only pointed to an oaken bench, standing beside the chair on which he sat himself and continued to look at Zbyszko, who finally became impatient, and said:

"It is not pleasant for me to sit as though I were in a court."

Then Jurand said:

"You wanted to fight with Lichtenstein?"

"Yes!" answered Zbyszko.

In the eye of the Lord of Spychow shone a strange light and his stern face began to brighten. After awhile he looked at Danusia and asked;

"And was it for her?"

"For no other! My uncle told you that I made a vow to her to tear the peacock tufts from German heads. But now there shall be not only three of them, but at least as many as I have fingers on both hands. In that way I will help you to avenge the death of Danusia's mother."

"Woe to them!" answered Jurand.

Then there was silence again. But Zbyszko, having noticed that by showing his hatred of the Germans, he would capture Jurand's heart, said:

"I will not forgive them! They nearly caused my death."

Here he turned to Danusia and added:

"She saved me."

"I know," said Jurand.

"Are you angry?"

"Since you made a vow to her, you must serve her, because such is the knightly custom."

Zbyszko hesitated; but after awhile, he began to say with evident uneasiness:

"Do you know that she covered my head with her veil? All the knights and also the Franciscan who was with me holding the cross, heard her say: 'He is mine!' Therefore I will be loyal to her until death, so help me God!"

Having said this, he kneeled, and wishing to show that he was familiar with the customs of chivalry, he kissed both of Danusia's shoes with great reverence. Then he arose and having turned to Jurand, asked him:

"Have you ever seen another as fair as she?"

Jurand suddenly put his hands behind his head, and having closed his eyes, he said loudly:

"I have seen one other; but the Germans killed her."

"Then listen," said Zbyszko, enthusiastically; "we have the same wrong and the same vengeance. Those dog-brothers also killed my people from Bogdaniec. You cannot find a better man for your work. It is no new thing for me! Ask my uncle. I can fight either with spear or axe, short sword or long sword! Did my uncle tell you about those Fryzjans? I will slaughter the Germans for you like sheep; and as for the girl, I vow to you on my knees that I will fight for her even with the *starosta* of hell himself, and that I will give her up neither for lands nor for herds, nor for any other thing! Even if some one offered me a castle with glass windows in it but without her, I would refuse the castle and follow her to the end of the world."

Jurand sat for awhile with his head between his hands; but finally he awakened as from a dream, and said with sadness and grief:

"I like you, young man, but I cannot give her to you; she is not destined for you, my poor boy."

Zbyszko hearing this, grew dumb and began to look at Jurand with wondering eyes.

But Danusia came to his help. Zbyszko was dear to her, and she was pleased to be considered not "a bush" but "a grown-up girl." She also liked the betrothal and the dainties which the knight used to bring her every day; therefore when she understood that she was likely to lose all this, she slipped down from the arm chair and having put her head on her father's lap, she began to cry:

"*Tatulu, Tatulu!*"[64] He evidently loved her better than anything else, for he put his hand softly on her head, while from his face disappeared all trace of deadly grudge and anger; only sadness remained.

In the meantime Zbyszko recovered his composure, and now said:

"How is it? Do you wish to oppose God's will?"

To this Jurand replied:

"If it be God's will, then you will get her; but I cannot give you my consent. Bah! I would be glad to do it, but I cannot."

Having said this, he arose, took Danusia in his arms, and went toward the door. When Zbyszko tried to detain him, he stopped for a moment and said:

"I will not be angry with you if you render her knightly services; but do not ask me any questions, because I cannot tell you anything."

And he went out.

### CHAPTER III

The next day Jurand did not avoid Zbyszko at all; and he did not prevent him from performing for Danusia, during the journey, those different services which, being her knight, he was obliged to render her. On the contrary, Zbyszko noticed that the gloomy *Pan* of Spychow looked at him kindly, as if he were regretting that he had been obliged to refuse his request. The young *wlodyka* tried several times to have some conversation with him. After they started from Krakow, there were plenty of opportunities during the journey, because both accompanied the princess on horseback; but as soon as Zbyszko endeavored to learn something about the secret difficulties separating him from Danusia, the conversation was suddenly ended.

Jurand's face became gloomy, and he looked at Zbyszko uneasily as if he were afraid he would betray himself.

Zbyszko thought that perhaps the princess knew what the obstacle was; so having an opportunity to speak to her privately, he inquired; but she could not tell him anything.

"Certainly there is some secret," she said. "Jurand himself told me that; but he begged me not to question him further, because he not only did not wish to tell what it was, but he could not. Surely he must be bound by some oath, as so often happens among the knights. But God will help us and everything will turn out well."

"Without Danusia I will be as unhappy as a chained dog or a bear in a ditch," answered Zbyszko. "There will be neither joy nor pleasure, nothing but sorrow and sighing; I will go against the Tartars with Prince Witold and may they kill me there. But first I must accompany uncle to Bogdaniec, and then tear from German heads the peacock's tufts as I promised. Perhaps the Germans will kill me; and I prefer such a death rather than to live and see some one else take Danusia."

The princess looked at him with her kind blue eyes, and asked him, with a certain degree of astonishment:

"Then you would permit it?"

"I? As long I have breath in my nostrils, it will not happen, unless my hand be paralyzed, and I be unable to hold my axe!"

"Then you see!"

"Bah! But how can I take her against her father's will?"

To this the princess said, as to herself:

"Does it not happen that way sometimes?"

Then to Zbyszko:

"God's will is stronger than a father's will. What did Jurand say to you?"

He said to me 'If it be God's will, then he will get her.'"

"He said the same to me!" exclaimed Zbyszko.

"Do you not see?"

"It is my only consolation, gracious lady."

"I will help you, and you can be sure of Danusia's constancy. Only yesterday I said to her: 'Danusia, will you always love Zbyszko?' And she answered: 'I will be Zbyszko's and no one else's.' She is still a green berry, but when she promises anything, she keeps her word, because she is the daughter of a knight. Her mother was like her."

"Thank God!" said Zbyszko.

"Only remember to be faithful to her also; man is inconstant; he promises to love one faithfully, and afterward he promises another."

"May Lord Jesus punish me if I prove such!" exclaimed Zbyszko energetically.

"Well, remember then. And after you have conveyed your uncle to Bogdaniec, come to our court; there will be some opportunity then for you to win your spurs; then we will see what can be

done. In the meanwhile Danusia will mature, and she will feel God's will; although she loves you very much even now, it is not the same love a woman feels. Perhaps Jurand will give his consent, because I see he likes you. You can go to Spychow and from there can go with Jurand against the Germans; it may happen that you will render him some great service and thus gain his affection."

"Gracious princess, I have thought the same; but with your sanction it will be easier."

This conversation cheered Zbyszko. Meanwhile at the first baiting place, old Macko became worse, and it was necessary to remain until he became better. The good princess, Anna Danuta, left him all the medicine she had with her; but she was obliged to continue her journey; therefore both *wlodykas* of Bogdaniec bid those belonging to the Mazovian court farewell. Zbyszko prostrated himself at the princess' feet, then at Danusia's; he promised her once more to be faithful and to meet her soon at Ciechanow or at Warszawa; finally he seized her in his strong arms, and having lifted her, he repeated with a voice full of emotion:

"Remember me, my sweetest flower! Remember me, my little golden fish!"

Danusia embraced him as though he were a beloved brother, put her little cheek to his face and wept copiously.

"I do not want to go to Ciechanow without Zbyszko; I do not want to go to Ciechanow!"

Jurand saw her grief, but he was not angry. On the contrary, he bid the young man good-bye kindly; and after he had mounted, he turned toward him once more, and said:

"God be with you; do not bear ill will toward me."

"How can I feel ill will toward you; you are Danusia's father!" answered Zbyszko cordially; then he bent to his stirrup, and the old man shook hands with him, and said:

"May God help you in everything! Understand?"

Then he rode away. But Zbyszko understood that in his last words, he wished him success; and when he went back to the wagon on which Macko was lying, he said:

"Do you know I believe he is willing; but something hinders him from giving his consent. You were in Spychow and you have good common sense, try to guess what it is."

But Macko was too ill. The fever increased so much toward evening, that he became delirious. Therefore instead of answering Zbyszko, he looked at him as if he were astonished; then he asked:

"Why do they ring the bells?"

Zbyszko was frightened. He feared that if the sick man heard the sound of bells, it was a sign that death would soon come. He feared also that the old man might die without a priest and without confession, and therefore go, if not to hell, then at least for long centuries to purgatory; therefore he determined to resume their journey, in order to reach, as soon as possible, some parish in which Macko could receive the last sacraments.

Consequently they started and traveled during the night. Zbyszko sat in the wagon on the hay, beside the sick man and watched him till day-break. From time to time he gave him wine to drink. Macko drank it eagerly, because it relieved him greatly. After the second quart he recovered from his delirium; and after the third, he fell asleep; he slept so well that Zbyszko bent toward him from time to time, to ascertain if he was still alive.

Until the time of his imprisonment in Krakow, he did not realize how dearly he loved this uncle who replaced, for him, father and mother. But now he realized it very well; and he felt that after his uncle's death, life would be very lonesome for him, alone, without relatives, except the abbot who held Bogdaniec in pledge, without friends and without anyone to help him. The thought came to him that if Macko died, it would be one more reason for vengeance on the Germans, by whose means he had nearly lost his head, by whom all his forefathers had been killed, also Danusia's mother and many other innocent people, whom he knew or about whom he had heard from his acquaintances – and he began to say to himself:

"In this whole kingdom, there is no man who has not suffered some wrong from them, and who would not like to avenge those wrongs." Here he remembered the Germans with whom he fought at Wilno, and he knew that even the Tartars were less cruel.

The coming dawn interrupted his thoughts. The day was bright but cold. Evidently Macko felt better, because he was breathing more regularly and more quietly. He did not awaken until the sun was quite warm; then he opened his eyes and said:

"I am better. Where are we?"

"We are approaching Olkusk. You know, where they dig silver."

"If one could get that which is in the earth, then one could rebuild Bogdaniec!"

"I see you are better," answered Zbyszko laughing. "Hej! it would be enough even for a stone castle! We will go to the *fara*,[65] because there the priests will offer us hospitality and you will be able to make your confession. Everything is in God's hands; but it is better to have one's conscience clear."

"I am a sinner and will willingly repent," answered Macko. "I dreamed last night that the devils were taking my skin off. They were talking German. Thanks be to God that I am better. Have you slept any?"

"How could I sleep, when I was watching you?"

"Then lie down for a while. When we arrive, I will awaken you."

"I cannot sleep!"

"What prevents you?"

Zbyszko looked at his uncle and said:

"What else can it be, if not love? I have pain in my heart; but I will ride on horseback for a while, that will help me."

He got down from the wagon, and mounted the horse, which his servant brought for him; meanwhile, Macko touched his sore side; but he was evidently thinking about something else and not about his illness, because he tossed his head, smacked his lips and finally said:

"I wonder and wonder, and I cannot wonder enough, why you are so eager for love, because your father was not that way, and neither am I."

But Zbyszko, instead of answering, stretched himself on the saddle, put his hands on his hips, gave his head a toss and sang:

"I cried the whole night, cried in the morning,  
Where have you been, my sweet girl, my darling!  
It will not help me, if I mourn for thee,  
Because I am quite sure, you will not see me."

"Hej!"

This "hej" resounded in the forest, reverberated against the trunks of the trees, finally reëchoed in the far distance and then was lost in the thickets.

Again Macko felt his side, in which the German spearhead had lodged and said, moaning a little:

"Formerly the people were wiser!"

Then he became thoughtful, as if recollecting the old times; and he added:

"Although even then some of them were stupid also."

But, in the meantime, they emerged from the forest, behind which they perceived the miners' sheds, and further walls, built by King Kazimierz, and the tower of the *fara* erected by Wladyslaw Lokietek.

The canon of the *fara* heard Macko's confession and offered them hospitality; they remained there over night, and started the next morning. Beyond Olkusk, they turned toward Szlonsk,[66] and

on its boundaries, they proposed to ride toward Wielkopolska. The road was laid out through a large forest, in which there was heard toward sunset, the roaring of the urus and of the bison, and during the night the eyes of wolves were seen shining behind the thick hazelnut trees. But the greatest danger which threatened the traveler on this road, was from the German and Germanized knights of Szlonsk, whose castles were erected here and there near the boundaries. It is true, that because of the war with the Opolczyk, Naderspraw, whom the Silesians were helping against King Wladyslaw, the majority of these castles had been destroyed by Polish hands; it was necessary, however, to be watchful, and especially after sunset, and to have one's weapons ready.

They were riding so quietly, however, that Zbyszko found the journey tedious; when they were about one day's journey from Bogdaniec, they heard the snorting and trampling of horses behind them.

"Some people are following us," said Zbyszko.

Macko, who was awake, looked at the stars and answered like an experienced traveler:

"Day-break is near. Robbers do not attack toward the end of the night."

Zbyszko stopped the wagon; however, placed the men across the road, facing the advancing horses, and waited.

In fact, after a certain time he perceived in the dusk, several horsemen. One of them was riding ahead, and it was evident that he did not wish to hide, because he was singing. Zbyszko could not hear the words of the song; but the gay "hoc! hoc!" with which the stranger ended each refrain, reached his ears.

"Our people!" he said to himself.

After a while he shouted, however:

"Stop!"

"And you sit down!" answered a joyous voice.

"Who are you?"

"And you?"

"Why do you follow us?"

"And why do you obstruct the road?"

"Answer, our crossbows are bent."

"And ours, – thrust out, – aimed!"

"Answer like a man, otherwise woe to you!"

To this a merry song was given, as an answer to Zbyszko.

"One misery with another  
They are dancing on the crossway.  
Hoc! Hoc! Hoc!  
What use have they of dancing?  
It's a good thing, anyhow.  
Hoc! Hoc! Hoc!"

Zbyszko was amazed at hearing such an answer; meantime, the song stopped and the same voice asked:

"And how is the old man Macko? Does he still breathe?"

Macko rose in the wagon and said:

"For God's sake, they are some of our people!"

Zbyszko rushed forward.

"Who asks about Macko?"

"A neighbor. Zych of Zgorzelice. I have looked for you for a week and inquired about you from all on the road."

"*Rety!*[67] Uncle! Zych of Zgorzelice is here!" shouted Zbyszko.

They began to greet each other joyfully because Zych was really their neighbor, and also a good man of whom everybody was very fond on account of his mirth.

"Well, how are you?" asked he, shaking hands with Macko. "Still *hoc*, or no more *hoc*!"[68]

"Hej, no more *hoc*!" answered Macko. "But I see you gladly. Gracious God, it is as if I were already in Bogdaniec."

"What is the matter with you; I heard that the Germans had wounded you?"

"They did, dog-brothers! I A head of a spear stuck between my ribs."

"You see!" said Zbyszko, "everybody advises the grease of a bear. As soon as we reach Bogdaniec, I will go with an axe to the *barcie*."[69]

"Perhaps Jagienka has some."

"What Jagienka? Your wife's name was Malgochna," said Macko.

"O! Malgochna is no more! It will be three years on St. Michael's day since Malgochna was buried in the priests' field. She was a sturdy woman; may the Lord make his face shine upon her soul! Jagienka is exactly like her, only younger."

"Behind a ravine, there is a mount,  
As was mother, such is daughter.  
Hoc! Hoc!"

"I told Malgochna not to climb the pine tree because she was no longer young. But she would climb it. The branch broke; she fell and was badly hurt; within three days, she died."

"Lord, make your face shine upon her soul!" said Macko. "I remember, I remember! When she was angry, the farm boys used to hide in the hay. But she was clever. So she fell from a pine tree!"

"She fell down like a cone. Do you know, after the funeral I was so stupefied with grief, that for three days they could not arouse me. They thought I was dead. Afterward, I wept for a long time. But Jagienka is also clever. She takes care of everything."

"I can scarcely remember her. She was not as large as the helve of an axe when I went away. She could pass under a horse without touching its body. Bah! that is a long time ago, and she must have grown."

"She was fifteen the day of St. Agnes; but I have not seen her for more than a year."

"Why have you not seen her? Where have you been?"

"To the war. I do not need to stay home; Jagienka takes care of everything."

Macko, although ill, began to listen attentively when the war was mentioned, and asked:

"Perhaps you were with *Kniaz* Witold at Worskla?"

"Yes, I was there," answered Zych of Zgorzelice gaily. "Well, the Lord God did not send him good luck; we were dreadfully defeated by Edyga. First they killed our horses. A Tartar will not attack you openly like a Christian knight, but throws his arrows from afar. You attack him and he flees, and then again throws his arrows. What can you do with such a man? In our army the knights boasted and said: 'We do not need to lower our spears, nor draw our swords; we will crush the vermin under our horses' feet.' So they boasted; but when the arrows began to twange, it grew dark they were so numerous, and the battle was soon over. Hardly one out of ten survived. Will you believe it? More than half of the army were slain; seventy Lithuanian and Russian princes lay dead on the battlefield; and one could not count in two weeks' time, the *bojars* and other courtiers, whom they call *otroks*, that were killed."

"I heard about it," interrupted Macko. "Many of our knights perished also."

"Bah! even ten Knights of the Cross were killed, because they were obliged to serve in Witold's army. Many of our people perished, because they, you know, never run away. *Kniaz* Witold had the greatest confidence in our knights and he wanted a guard of them round him during the battle,

exclusively Poles. Hi! Hi! Great havoc was made among them; but he was not touched! *Pan* Spytko of Mielsztyn was killed, also the sword bearer, Bernat, Judge Mikolaj, Prokop, Przeclaw, Dobrogost, Jasko of Lazewice, Pilik Mazur, Warsz of Michow, *Wojewoda* Socha, Jasko of Dombrowa, Pietrko of Miloslaw, Szczepiecki, Oderski and Tomko Lagoda. Who can enumerate all of them! Some of them had been hit with so many arrows, that after death they looked like porcupines; it was awful to look at them!"

Here he laughed as if he were telling a most amusing story, and at once he began to sing:

"You have learned what is a Tartar,  
When he beat you and flew afar!"

"Well, and what then?" asked Zbyszko.

"Then the grand duke escaped; but he was as courageous as he usually is. The more you press him, the farther he jumps, like a hazelnut stick. We rushed to the Tavianian ford to defend those crossing over. There were with us a few knights from Poland. The second day, Edyga came with a swarm of Tartars; but he could not do a thing. Hej! When he wanted to pass the ford, we fought him so hard he could not do it. We killed and caught many of them. I myself caught five Tartars, and I sent them to Zgorzelice. You will see what dogheads they have."

"In Krakow, they say that the war may reach Poland also."

"Do they think Edyga is a fool! He knows well what kind of knights we have; and he also knows that the greatest knights remained home, because the queen was not pleased when Witold began the war on his own authority. Ej, he is cunning, that old Edyga! He understood at Tavanja that the prince's army had increased and had gone far beyond the tenth-land!"

"But you returned?"

"Yes, I returned. There is nothing to do there. In Krakow I heard about you, and that you had started a little ahead of me."

Here he turned to Zbyszko:

"Hej! my lord, the last time I saw you, you were a small boy; and now, although there is no light, I suppose you are large like an urus. And you had your crossbows ready! One can see you have been in the war."

"War has nurtured me since childhood. Let my uncle tell you if I am lacking in experience."

"It is not necessary for your uncle to tell me anything; in Krakow, I saw the *Pan* of Taczew who told me about you. But I understand that the Mazur does not want to give you his daughter. I have nothing against you; but I like you. You will forget about that one when you see my Jagienka. She is a wonder!"

"I shall not forget, even if I see ten such as your Jagna."

"She will get the estate of Moczydoly for her dowry. Many will ask me for Jagna, do not fear?"

Zbyszko wanted to answer: "But not I!" But Zych of Zgorzelice began to sing:

"I will bend to your knees  
And you for that, will give me the girl,  
Give me the girl!"

"You are always happy and singing," said Macko.

"Well, and what do the blessed do in heaven."

"They sing."

"Well, then! And the damned cry. I prefer to go to those who sing rather than to those who cry; and St. Peter will say thus: 'We must let him into paradise; otherwise he will sing in hell, and that will not be right.' Look, the day breaks!"

In fact, daylight was coming. After awhile they arrived at a large glade. By the lake covering the greater part of the glade, some people were fishing; but seeing the armed men, they left their nets and immediately seized their picks and staffs and stood ready for battle.

"They thought we were robbers," said Zych, laughing. "Hej, fishermen! To whom do you belong?"

They stood for a while silently, looking distrustfully; but finally one of them having recognized that they were knights, answered:

"To the *ksiondz*, the abbot of Tulcza."

"Our relative," said Macko, "the same who holds Bogdaniec in pledge. These must be his forests; but he must have purchased them a short time ago."

"He did not buy them," answered Zych. "He was fighting about them with Wilk of Brzozowa and it seems that the abbot defeated Wilk. A year ago they were going to fight on horseback with spears and long swords for this part of the forest; but I do not know how it ended because I went away."

"Well, we are relatives," said Macko, "he will not quarrel with us."

"Perhaps; he is a chivalrous abbot who knows how to wear a helmet; but he is pious and he sings the mass beautifully. Don't you remember? When he shouts at mass, the swallows nested under the ceiling, fall from their nests. In that way God's glory increases."

"Certainly I remember! At ten steps he could blow the candles at the altar out. Has he been in Bogdaniec?"

"Yes, he was there. He settled five peasants on the land. He has also been at my house at Zgorzelice, because, as you know, he baptized Jagienka, of whom he is very fond and calls her little daughter."

"God will bless him if he be willing to leave me the peasants," said Macko.

"*Owa!* what will five peasants amount to! Then Jagienka will ask him and he will not refuse her."

Here the conversation stopped for a while, because over the dark forest and from the pink down, the bright sun had risen and lighted the environs. The knights greeted it with the customary: "May it be blessed!" and then having made the sign of the cross, they began their morning prayers.

Zych finished first and said to his companions:

"I hope to see you well soon. Hej! you have both changed. You, Macko, must regain your health. Jagienka will take care of you, because there is no woman in your house. One can see that you have a piece of iron between your ribs."

Here he turned toward Zbyszko:

"Show yourself also. Well, mighty God! I remember you when you were small and used to climb on the colts by the help of their tails; and now, what a knight! The face looks like that of a little lord; but the body like that of a sturdy man. Such can wrestle even with a bear."

"A bear is nothing for him!" said Macko. "He was younger than he is to-day, when that Fryzjan called him a beardless youth; and he resenting it, immediately pulled out the Fryzjan's mustaches."

"I know," interrupted Zych, "and you fought afterward, and captured their retinue. *Pan* of Taczew told me all about it:"

"There came a German very proud,  
He was buried with sore snout;  
Hoc! Hoc!"

Zbyszko wondered at Zych's long thin figure, at his thin face with its enormous nose and at his laughing round eyes.

"O!" said he, "with such a neighbor there will be no sadness, if God only restore my uncle's health."

"It is good to have a joyful neighbor, because with a jolly fellow there will be no quarrel," answered Zych. "Now listen to what I tell you. You have been away from home a long time, and you will not find much comfort in Bogdaniec. I do not say in the farming, because the abbot has taken care of that; he dug up a large piece of the forest and settled new peasants. But as he went there very often, you will find the larder empty; even in the house, there is hardly a bench or a bunch of straw to sleep on; and a sick man needs some comforts. You had better come with me to Zgorzelice. I will be glad to have you stay a month or two. During that time, Jagienka will take care of Bogdaniec. Rely on her and do not bother yourselves with anything. Zbyszko can go there, from time to time, to inspect the farming; I will bring the abbot to Zgorzelice, and you can settle your account with him. The girl will take good care of you, as of a father, and during illness, a woman's care is the best. Well, my dear friends, will you do as I ask you?"

"We know that you are a good man and you always were," answered Macko with emotion; "but don't you see, if I must die on account of this wound, I prefer to die in my own home. Then when one is home, although he is old, he can inquire about different things, can inspect and do many other things. If God order me to go to the other world, well, then I cannot help it! I cannot escape it even with better care. As for inconvenience, we are accustomed to that at the war. Even a bunch of straw is pleasant to that one who, during several years, has slept on the bare ground. But I thank you for your kind heart and if I be not able to show you my gratitude, God will permit Zbyszko to do it."

Zych of Zgorzelice, who was noted for his kind heart and readiness to oblige, began to insist: but Macko was firm: "If I must die, it will be better to die in my own courtyard!"

He had longed to see Bogdaniec for several years, therefore now, when he was so near it, he must go there, even if it were his last night. God was merciful, having permitted him who was so ill, to reach here.

He brushed away the tears gathered under his eyelids, with his hand, looked around and said:

"If these are the woods of Wilk of Bizozowa we will be home this afternoon."

"They do not belong to Wilk of Bizozowa any longer; but to the abbot," said Zych.

Macko smiled and said after awhile:

"If they belong to the abbot, then sometime, they may belong to us."

"Bah! awhile ago you were talking about death," said Zych joyfully, "and now you wish to outlive the abbot."

"No, I will not outlive him; but Zbyszko may."

Further conversation was interrupted by the sound of horns in the forest.

Zych stopped his horse and began to listen.

"Somebody is hunting," said he. "Wait."

"Perhaps it is the abbot. It would be pleasant to meet him here."

"Keep quiet!"

Here he turned to his retinue.

"Stop!"

They halted. The horns resounded nearer, and soon afterward the baying of dogs was heard.

"Stop!" repeated Zych. "They are coming toward us."

Zbyszko jumped from his horse and began to shout:

"Give me the crossbow! The beast may attack us! Hasten! Hasten!"

Having seized the crossbow from the servant's hands, he rested it against the ground, pressed it against his abdomen, bent, stretched his back like a bow, and having seized the string with the fingers of both hands, he pulled it on to the iron hook; then placed an arrow and sprang into the woods.

"He stretched it without a crank!" whispered Zych, astonished at such great strength.

"Ho, he is a strong boy!" answered Macko, proudly.

Meanwhile, the sound of horns and the barking of dogs stole nearer; all at once, at the right side of the forest, a heavy trampling resounded, accompanied by the crackling of broken branches

and bushes – then out of the thicket rushed an old bearded urus, with his gigantic head lowered, with bloody eyes and panting tongue, breathless and terrible. Coming to a small ravine, he leaped it, but fell on his forelegs; but immediately he arose, and a few seconds later he would have disappeared in the thicket on the other side of the road, when the string of the crossbow twanged, the whistling of the arrow resounded, the beast reared, turned, roared dreadfully and fell on the ground as if he were struck by a thunderbolt.

Zbyszko leaped from behind a tree, again stretched the crossbow, and approached the bull who was pawing the ground with his hind feet.

But having glanced at it, he turned quietly toward the retinue, and began to shout from afar:

"I hit him so hard that he is severely wounded!"

"You are a strong boy!" said Zych, riding toward him, "with one arrow only!"

"Bah, it was near, and the speed was great. Come and see; not only the iron, but even the shaft has disappeared under the left shoulder bone."

"The huntsmen must be near; they will claim the beast."

"I will not give it to them!" answered Zbyszko. "It was killed on the road, and the road is not private property."

"But if it belong to the abbot?"

"Well, then he may have it."

Meanwhile, several dogs came out of the forest. Having perceived the animal, they rushed on him.

"Soon the huntsmen will appear," said Zych. "Look! There they are, but they do not see the beast yet. Stop! Stop! Here, here! Killed! Killed!"

Then he became silent, and sheltered his eyes with one hand; after a while, he said:

"For God's sake! what has happened? Have I become blind, or does it only seem so to me?"

"There is some one on a piebald horse in the front," said Zbyszko.

Then Zych exclaimed at once:

"Dear Jesus! It must be Jagienka!"

And he began to shout:

"Jagna! Jagna!"

Then he rushed forward; but before he could make his horse gallop, Zbyszko perceived a most wonderful spectacle; he beheld a girl sitting like a man, on a swift piebald horse, rushing toward them; she had a crossbow in one hand and a boar-spear on her shoulders. Her floating hair was full of hop strobiles; her face was bright like the dawn. Her shirt was opened on the bosom, and she wore a *serdak*.<sup>[70]</sup> Having reached them, she reined in her horse; for a while, her face expressed surprise, hesitation, joy; finally, being scarcely able to believe her own eyes, she began to cry in a childish voice:

"*Tatulo*,<sup>[71]</sup> *tatus*<sup>[71]</sup> dearest!"

In the twinkling of an eye, she jumped from her horse, and Zych dismounted also to welcome her; she threw her arms around his neck. For a long time, Zbyszko heard only the sounds of kisses and these two words: "*Tatulo!* *Jagula!* *Tatulo!* *Jagula!*" repeated in a joyful outburst.

Both retinues now approached, and Macko arrived also; they continued to repeat: "*Tatulo!* *Jagula!*" and still kissed each other. Finally Jagienka asked:

"Then you decided to return from the war? Are you well?"

"From the war. Why should I not be well? And you? And the boys? Are they well also? Yes, otherwise you would not run in the forest. But, my girl, what are you doing here?"

"Don't you see that I am hunting?" answered Jagienka, laughing.

"In somebody else's woods?"

"The abbot gave me permission. He even sent me experienced huntsmen and a pack of hounds."

Here she turned to the servants:

"Chase the dogs away, they will tear the skin!"

Then to Zych:

"Oj, how glad I am to see you!" And they again kissed each other. When they were through, Jagna said:

"We are far from home; we followed the beast. I am sure it must be more than ten miles; the horses are exhausted. What a large urus! Did you notice? He must have at least three of my arrows in him; the last one killed him."

"He was killed by the last, but it was not yours; this knight killed him."

Jagienka threw her hair back and looked at Zbyszko sharply, but not very friendly.

"Do you know who he is?" asked Zych.

"I do not know."

"No wonder you do not recognize him, because he has grown. Perhaps you will recognize old Macko of Bogdaniec?"

"For God's sake! is that Macko of Bogdaniec?" exclaimed Jagienka.

Having approached the wagon, she kissed Macko's hand.

"It is you?"

"Yes, it is I; but I am obliged to ride in the wagon, because the Germans wounded me."

"What Germans? The war was with the Tartars?"

"There was a war with the Tartars, but we were not in that war; we fought in the war in Lithuania, Zbyszko and I."

"Where is Zbyszko?"

"Then you did not recognize Zbyszko?" said Macko smiling.

"Is that man Zbyszko?" exclaimed the girl, looking again at the young knight.

"Yes, it is he."

"You must give him a kiss, because he is an old acquaintance of yours," said Zych, mirthfully.

Jagienka turned gaily toward Zbyszko; but suddenly she retreated, and having covered her eyes with her hand, she said:

"I am bashful."

"But we have known each other since we were children," said Zbyszko.

"Aha! we know each other well. I remember when you made us a visit with Macko about eight years ago, and my *matula*[72] gave us some nuts with honey; you being the elder, struck me with your fist and then ate all the nuts yourself."

"He will not act like that now!" said Macko. "He has been with *Kniaz* Witold, and with the court in Krakow, and he has learned courtly manners."

But Jagienka was now thinking about something else; turning toward Zbyszko, she asked:

"Then you killed the urus?"

"Yes."

"We must see where the arrow is."

"You cannot see it; it disappeared under the shoulder bone."

"Be quiet; do not dispute," said Zych. "We all saw him shoot the urus, and we saw something still better; he bent the bow without a crank."

Jagienka looked at Zbyszko for the third time, but now with astonishment.

"You bent the crossbow without a crank?"

Zbyszko, detecting some doubt in her voice, rested the crossbow on the ground, and bent it in the twinkling of an eye; then wishing to show that he was familiar with knightly manners, he kneeled on one knee and handed the bow to Jagienka. But the girl, instead of taking it from him, suddenly blushed – she did not know why herself, and began to fasten the shirt, which, during the swift riding, had become opened on her bosom.

## CHAPTER IV

The next day after their arrival at Bogdaniec, Macko and Zbyszko began to look around their old home; they soon realized that Zych of Zgorzelice was right when he told them that at first they would be uncomfortable.

With the farming they could get along quite well. There were several fields cultivated by the peasants whom the abbot had settled there. Formerly there had been much cultivated land in Bogdaniec; but after the battle at Plowce[73] where the family Grady perished, there was a scarcity of working hands; and after the invasion of the Germans from Szlonsk and after the war of Nalenczs with Grzymalits, the formerly rich fields became overgrown with trees. Macko could not help it. In vain he tried for several years to bring farmers from Krzesnia and rent the land to them; they refused to come, preferring to remain on their own strips of land rather than to cultivate some one else's. His offer however attracted some shelterless men; in the different wars, he captured several slaves whom he married and settled in the houses; and in that way he populated the village. But it was hard work for him; therefore as soon as he had an opportunity, Macko pledged the whole of Bogdaniec, thinking that it would be easier for the powerful abbot to settle the land with peasants, and that the war would bring to him and to Zbyszko some people and money. In fact, the abbot was energetic. He had increased the working force of Bogdaniec with five peasant families; he increased the stock of cattle and horses; then he built a barn, a stable and a cow house. But as he did not live in Bogdaniec, he did not repair the house. Macko, who had hoped to find the *grodek* surrounded with a ditch and hedge when he returned, found everything just as he had left it, with this difference only, that the walls were more crooked and seemed to be lower, because they had settled deeper in the earth.

The house contained an enormous hall, two large rooms with alcoves, and a kitchen. In the rooms there were windows made of bladders; and in the centre of each room, there was a fireplace made of lime, and the smoke escaped through a hole in the ceiling. From the ceilings now blackened from smoke, during former times used to hang the hams of boars, bears and deer, rumps of roes, sides of beef and rolls of sausages. But now the hooks were empty as well as the shelves fastened to the walls, on which they used to put the tin and earthen dishes. The walls beneath the shelves were no longer empty, however, because Zbyszko had ordered his servants to hang helmets, cuirasses, long swords and short swords on them; and further along boar-spears and forks, caparisons and saddles. The smoke blackened the weapons, and it was necessary to clean them very often. But Macko, who was careful, ordered the servants to put the costly clothes in the alcove in which his bed stood.

In the front rooms there stood near the windows, pine tables and benches of the same, on which the lords used to sit during the meals, with all their servants. People accustomed to war were easily satisfied; but in Bogdaniec there was neither bread nor flour and no dishes. The peasants brought what they could; Macko expected that the neighbors, as was then customary, would help him; and he was not mistaken, at least as far as Zych of Zgorzelice was concerned.

The second day, when the old *wlodyka* was sitting on a log in front of the house, delighted with the bright autumn day, Jagienka came, riding a black horse; she dismounted and approached Macko, out of breath on account of fast riding, and rosy as an apple; she said:

"May you be blessed! *Tatulo* sent me to inquire about your health."

"I am no worse," answered Macko; "and at least I have slept in my own house."

"But you cannot be comfortable at all, and a sick person needs some care."

"We are hardened people. It is true that at first there was no comfort; but we were not hungry. We ordered an ox and two sheep killed, so there is plenty of meat. The women brought some flour and eggs; the worst is that we have no dishes."

"Well, I ordered my servants to load two wagons. On one there are two beds and dishes, and on the other different provisions. There are some cakes and flour, some salt pork and dried mushrooms; there is a barrel of beer and one of mead; in fact a little of everything we had in the house."

Macko, who was grateful for this kindness, caressed Jagienka's head, and said:

"May God reward your father and you. When our housekeeping improves, we will return the provisions."

"How clever you are! We are not like the Germans, who take back what they give."

"Well, so much more may God reward you. Your father told us what a good housekeeper you are, and that you had taken care of Zgorzelice the whole year?"

"Yes! If you need anything else, send somebody; but send some one who will know what is needed, because a stupid servant never knows what he has been sent for."

Here Jagienka began to look round, and Macko having noticed it, smiled and asked:

"For whom are you looking?"

"I am looking for no one!"

"I will send Zbyszko to thank you and your father. Do you like Zbyszko?"

"I have not looked at him."

"Then look at him now, because he is just coming."

In fact Zbyszko was coming from the stable. He was dressed in a reindeer jacket and round felt cap like those worn under the helmets; his hair was without a net, cut evenly over his eyebrows and hung in golden curls on his shoulders; he walked swiftly, having noticed the girl; he was tall and graceful, looking like the shield-bearer of a rich nobleman.

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